"WHERE SCANDINAVIAN IS SPOKEN:" ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ASSIMILATION AMONG SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE CHURCH OF GOD (ANDERSON, INDIANA)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ii

Chapter

I. HISTORY 1

- Organization 8
- Community 19
- Life Together 41
- The Dispersed Community 48

II. IDENTITY 56

- Scripture and History 63
- "Thrashing Babylon" 79
- An Exclusivist Mentality 107

III. DOCTRINE 117

- The Doctrine of Salvation 119
- The Doctrine of the Church 146
- The Doctrine of Divine Healing 169

IV. PIETY 185

- Campmeeting Revivalism 189
- Piety as Ethics 218

V. CHURCH AND SOCIETY 238

- The Problem of Reform 241
- Christian Love and Social Concern 250
- The Centrality of Home and Family 266

VI. CONCLUSION 286

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APPENDIXES 299

BIBLIOGRAPHY 314

PREFACE

The story of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company combines two aspects of late nineteenth and early twentieth century American life: the religious reform known as the holiness movement and Scandinavian immigration. Studies have been made of Scandinavian Methodists and Baptists in the United States. But what follows is the first study to examine the interrelationship of this immigrant group and the holiness movement. This study is even more limited than that, however, for the holiness movement spawned a number of new religious groups. One of those was the Church of God Reformation Movement, founded by Daniel S. Warner (1842-1895) about the year 1880. Evangelists associated with this group circulated through the Midwest and upper Mississippi valley, where they encountered large numbers of Scandinavian immigrants during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The product of this encounter was Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, a group of converted Scandinavian immigrants who labored to proclaim among their countrymen the message of the Church of God. This company and the group of immigrants clustered about it are the subject of this study.

The immediate historical context of the Church of God was the reawakened interest in the Wesleyan doctrine of

Christian perfection. This interest had been stimulated by the National Campmeeting Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness. The association had been organized in 1867 at Vineland, New Jersey, under the leadership of Methodist ministers John S. Inskip, William B. Osborne and William McDonald. But these three men were organizers rather than founders of the holiness movement. Even before the Civil War prominent Methodist bishops lamented the reduced attention which the doctrine of perfection was receiving from Methodist preachers. A number of these bishops were part of a circle formed around the work of one of the truly remarkable women in American religious history, Phoebe Worrell Palmer. Throughout much of her long life Mrs. Palmer labored tirelessly as preacher, author, publisher, philanthropist and social reformer, all of these roles stemming from her enthusiastic support of holiness doctrine.

The debate within Methodism which led to the organization of the National Holiness Association turned on the answer to the question whether it was possible for Christians to live above sin. Holiness people argued that a sinless life was not only possible, but the privilege and responsibility of all Christians. Perfection was made possible through "entire" sanctification, "a second work of grace wrought in the heart of the believer subsequent to justification." Opponents of this position, mainline Methodists for the most part, had arrived at a more accommodative interpretation of the doctrine of perfection, claiming that Christians gradually advanced in holiness toward an ultimate goal of perfection that was much more vague in definition than the one offered by holiness advocates.

Although the debate over Christian perfection was essentially an intramural contest, a significant number of non-Methodists either sympathized with holiness people or actually entered the controversy on their side: Friends Dougan Clark and David Updegraff, Presbyterians Harry Belden and W. E. Boardman, Congregationalists Charles Finney, Asa Mahan and T. C. Upham, Episcopalian Dr. Charles Cullis, Baptists A. B. Earle and George Morse, and an evangelist named Daniel S. Warner, who was associated with the General Eldership of the Churches of God in North America, a group which had been founded by the German Reformed revivalist John Winebrenner.

Winebrenner had dissociated himself from the German Reformed Church and in 1825 formed a Church of God on restorationist principles; he was intent on building his congregation on the pattern of the New Testament church. It was in a protracted meeting conducted by an evangelist of the Winebrenner group that D. S. Warner was converted in 1865. Little more than two years later he delivered his first sermon. For more than a decade he labored as a pastor, evangelist and home missionary. This period of ministry in the General Eldership of the Churches of God formed Warner's basic views on the necessity of restoring the New Testament unity of the church.

Warner's other central doctrinal theme was Christian perfection. During the decade of the 1870's his thought on entire sanctification developed, moving from an initial attitude of hostility to one of active interest and eventually, in 1877, to convinced believer. Warner's continued advocacy of holiness doctrine ultimately led to his expulsion from the General Eldership in 1878. He continued his association with the holiness movement until 1881, when he became convinced that it was a tacit supporter of the continuing division in Christendom, i.e., denominationalism. In January of 1881 Warner began publishing his views in a new paper, The Gospel Trumpet. This journal became the principal instrument by which Warner communicated his ideas of the holiness and unity of the church. The paper also was the prototype for the periodicals of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, Den Evangeliske Basun and Evangelii Trumpet.

Later in 1881 Warner formally severed his connections with groups or associations which in any way condoned the denominational structure of Christianity. In May he withdrew from the Indiana State Holiness Association when it refused to amend its constitution to admit any true Christian to its membership. The amendment was Warner's, but the association preferred to retain a clause that required association members both to belong to some religious organization and to participate in the harmonious cooperation of the holiness association with those bodies. The following autumn Warner also withdrew from the Northern Indiana Eldership of the Churches of God, a splinter group of the General Eldership, with which Warner had taken fellowship after being dismissed from the Winebrenner group.

When D. S. Warner withdrew from the Indiana Eldership on October 1, 1881, a handful of likeminded individuals accompanied him. Two weeks later, at Carson City, Michigan, he called a second group out of denominational confusion into the Church of God. This nucleus joined together with others to proclaim the restoration of the New Testament church on the bases of holiness and unity.

The Church of God's understanding of Christian unity, and the mobility of The Gospel Trumpet and the movement's evangelists, combined to produce a highly flexible ecclesiology and polity during the first two decades of the group's existence. No settled congregations or permanent pastors existed during this early period. The Church of God self-consciously described itself as a movement of God at work in history rather than a church or any other ecclesiastical body. For this reason there was virtually no formal organization of the movement as a believing or worshiping community. Matters of church discipline and fellowship were intentionally left to the activity of the Holy Spirit, who organized and administered the church through charismatically endowed individuals. This theory of charismatic church government enabled the movement to employ the name "Church of God" in three distinct ways, but all equally valid: as a reference to the universal body of Christians, as a reference to a local gathered body (as in "the church of God at St. Paul Park"), or in a specific reference to the movement called forth by Warner and his peers. This pattern of multiple usage persisted beyond the early era of the "flying messengers" into subsequent periods of more traditional congregational organization with settled pastors.

The special mention of the Church of God's polity is pertinent here, for it helps to explain the manner in which the term Guds Menighed is employed in the course of this study. The term is one Dano-Norwegian equivalent of "Church of God," and appears in this study in each of the three senses described above. I have elected to retain the Dano-Norwegian term because it was Scandinavians within the church universal, the gathered community and the reformation movement which occupied the attention and energy of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. My repeated use of some other terms also deserves clarification. The phrases "Basun family" and "St. Paul Park community" I have employed as synonyms for the small group of individuals, approximately twenty-five persons, who worked directly with the publishing company, indeed, who were the company. "Basun community" refers to the much wider circle of subscribers and others who identified themselves with the company's ideals.

The Basun community's characteristic use of the term menighed for "church" raises the question of its possible connections with the pietist movements of Scandinavia. Nordic pietists had employed the low church term menighed to communicate their sense of the church as a gathered community over against the inclusive Lutheran state churches, or kirke. Norway, Denmark and Sweden each experienced pietist revivals during the nineteenth century. The lay preacher Hans Nielsen Hauge was the leader of a particularly strong revival of Lutheran Christianity among Norwegian landed peasants in the first quarter of the century. In Denmark Kristen Madsen's conversion in 1819 led to a decade of independent, lay-led revivals. Particularly strong revivals broke out in Swedish Smoland in 1839. Pietist revivals commonly reoccurred in Scandinavia, especially after 1850.

In several of its features the program of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company bears a marked resemblance to Scandinavian pietism: the emphasis on Christianity as a lived experience, a moralistic and rigorously ethical approach to the Christian life, low church (gathered community) orientation, and a minimizing of the distinction between clergy and laity. Too much should not be made of these similarities, however. Only a very few Basun community figures indicate any connection with Scandinavian pietists prior to immigration. Contributors to the newspapers knew of the pietist movements and sympathized with them. However, Scandinavian immigrants in the Church of

God made no attempt at either a historical or theological link with pietists on the other side of the Atlantic.

Mention also must be made here of certain bibliographic procedures I followed. For the sake of readers unfamiliar with the Scandinavian languages I have supplied translations in the text, footnotes, and where applicable, appendixes. Book titles I have documented according to standard usage, but I have departed from this practice in the case of newspaper articles. Standard documentation requires only the newspaper name and date. I have elected to include, again, in order to supply additional information for the reader unversed in these immigrant languages, English translations of article titles. For the specialist in Scandinavian immigration, page references are also included for each article cited. In this manner I have tried to accommodate both kinds of readers without unnecessarily encumbering the footnote apparatus with parallel citations in one or the other Scandinavian language and English.

Finally, it would be thoughtless not to acknowledge here some of the persons who have made possible this milestone in my life. At Anderson College and the School of Theology I enjoyed the friendship and encouragement of Frederick v. Shoot, Thomas N. Pappas and John W. V. Smith. Similar gifts were generously offered at the Graduate Theological Union by Eldon Ernst, John von Rohr and Joseph Chinnici. I can only hope to emulate their combination of scholarship and fine teaching. I have also enjoyed the devoted support of my family, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Strege, who provided some badly needed financial assistance, and my wife and sons, Fran, Ike and Peter, who have watched an increasing number of Saturdays absorbed in the completion of this project. My work also has benefitted from the expertise of Delena Goodman, Librarian at Byrd Library, Anderson School of Theology, and John W. V. Smith in his capacity as Historian of the Church of God. Joyce Krepshaw and Becky Rice lightened my burden by typing earlier drafts. Others also should be acknowledged for their encouragement and suggestions, but my list of indebtednesses already grows too lengthy; they must be content with the knowledge of who they are. Because they are friends, they will.

Merle D. Strege
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CHAPTER I

HISTORY

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HISTORY

Late one night in the winter of 1882-83 a young Norwegian immigrant walked out on the Tenth Avenue bridge spanning the Mississippi River at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since arriving in America Sven O. Susag had experienced a long train of misfortunes: while drinking and playing pool in a saloon his money had been stolen; work was so difficult to find during one stretch of unemployment that he bought beer in saloons in order to eat the free lunch that accompanied it. When Susag did secure employment as a hod carrier on the construction site of the Great Northern Railroad bridge over St. Anthony Falls his luck improved only momentarily. After nearly falling from the unfinished bridge he came to fear heights and no longer could carry material out to the workmen. Once again Susag found himself without work. Terribly discouraged, he had decided on suicide.

Susag later said that as he took hold of the bridge railing that night a voice called to him, "When you jump your trouble will begin." Unable to see the voice's owner, Susag recalled, "I seemed to realize it was the Lord who had spoken to me."[1] This experience on the Tenth Street Bridge marked a turning point in Sven Susag's life. Still ahead lay all sorts of trials and uncertainty--a period of agnosticism, bouts of tuberculosis and business failure in the depression of 1892. But after he and his family moved to a farm near Paynesville, Minnesota, the pace of Susag's spiritual pilgrimage quickened. Sick and nearly destitute, he threw himself on the mercy of God but even yet his conversion was not completed.

Early in 1895 as the result of a dream in which Susag later claimed he saw a vision of himself as an itinerant minister, he became convinced of the reality of the human soul and his agnosticism "vanished." Finally, on March 12, 1895, Susag and his wife, Martha, were converted in their own home, apparently without benefit of pastoral assistance. The Susags were not only converted that day; they also were called into the ministry. Through a series of visions they claimed to have been shown "the evil of all sectarian division" and "light on the beautiful Church of God." Up until this point they had heard no preaching on the subject, nor were they acquainted with anyone else who believed as they did.[2] At some point during the next five years Sven and Martha Susag came into contact with the message of the Church of God Reformation Movement and became not only convinced followers but also among the most enthusiastic exponents of the proclamation.

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[1] S. O. Susag, Personal Reminiscences of S. O. Susag, (Guthrie, OK: Standard Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 7-8.

[2] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

While the Susags were on their religious pilgrimage the gospel work of a Danish immigrant named Thomas Nelson was reported in the pages of a holiness paper published by the Church of God, The Gospel Trumpet. In 1895 Nelson left Iowa for his native Denmark as a missionary herald of the new vision of holiness and Christian unity which he had received from other Church of God preachers and evangelists. No later than 1899 (the exact date is uncertain) he returned to the United States, where he began his work as an editor and guiding spirit of a band of Scandinavian immigrants committed to preaching the message of the Church of God among their fellow countrymen.

Motivated by a concern to see the Church of God teaching on holiness and Christian unity propagated among Scandinavians in America and Europe and charged with an apocalyptic urgency, Nelson founded a semi-monthly paper called Den Evangeliske Basun. From late 1900 until the spring of 1902 the paper's headquarters were in Muscatine, Iowa. During the year and a half that it was located there the paper was published under conditions of extreme hardship. Five people assisted Nelson in the Basun's typesetting and composition, tasks which were performed in a room on the second floor of Nelson's house. Composed forms were then hand-carried to the streetcar and thus transported to the printer in downtown Muscatine. Another man followed, pushing the printing stock in a wheelbarrow.[3]

After moving to Grand Forks, North Dakota in 1902 the little publishing company enjoyed much better circumstances. C. G. Neils, a local layman firmly committed to the teaching of the Church of God, offered the basement of his business, the Grand Forks Steam Laundry, as a publishing site. Money was donated for the purchase of a printing-press and other badly needed equipment. Neils' laundry provided the steam needed for power and the Nelson family quarters were no longer required to serve double duty as a printshop.[4] In the midst of a Scandinavian immigrant settlement in the Grand Forks area Nelson's publishing venture became a modest success: $1,500 worth of equipment and supplies were now in use and an English language booklet describing Church of God projects and missions envisioned "a promising future" for "the Scandinavian work."[5]

In 1903 the Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, as the group by then was known, relocated once again, this time seeking a more central location. The publishing company selected the village of St. Paul Park, Minnesota, approximately fifteen miles down the Mississippi River from St. Paul. The company remained at this location until after

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[3] O. T. Ring, personal letter to C. E. Brown, April 14, 1949, C. E. Brown correspondence, Church of God Archives, Anderson, Indiana.

[4] Ibid.

[5] N. H. Byrum, Familiar Names and Faces, (Moundsville, WV: Gospel Trumpet Publishing Company, 1902), p. 178.

World War I. St. Paul Park became the hub of an expanding network of itinerant preachers, colporteurs and lay gospel-workers, all of whom wanted to spread the news of the restoration of the New Testament church or as they called it, Guds Menighed.

Shortly after relocating in St. Paul Park the publishing company began a second periodical, a Swedish monthly called Evangelii Trumpet. A Swedish immigrant who had been involved with Nelson's work from the beginning in Muscatine, Otto T. Ring, edited the paper with the assistance of another immigrant, Charles A. Grant. The company's work force, known as the Basun family, grew to approximately twenty persons. Literature of all sorts--books, hymnals, almanacs, tracts, and of course the two periodicals--now rolled from the presses at St. Paul Park. This material was marketed or mailed free across the United States and to Europe as well. In response to this literature requests came from many places for ministers and gospel workers to come assist in planting new congregations of saints who had caught the vision of the Church of God.[6] The publishing house at St. Paul Park was growing into something more significant than a production and distribution center. It emerged as the natural focal point of a communications network that kept its readers and writers in contact with one another, and in the process of fulfilling that role became something of a symbol for all those who had joined in the work of Guds Menighed.

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[6] Ring letter (another reference to the material cited in n. 3).

The publishing company's holdings at St. Paul Park underwent significant capital development. Buildings were purchased or constructed to house the publishing plant, provide housing for the men and women who came there to work, later a chapel for the local congregation of the Church of God, many of whom were Scandinavians, and a home for the elderly. Providing food for the people who staffed these enterprises and others who came to St. Paul Park for training in gospel work were small farms and garden plots which were cultivated by other workers in the Basun family who might not be equipped for ministry but who could perform the support services which would free others for full-time labor in the Lord's vineyard.

The facilities at St. Paul Park served their purpose well until after World War I. Even before the war's outbreak an increasing percentage of the company's literature was being mailed to Europe. As a consequence of both developments the publishing company leadership seriously deliberated the usefulness of a Scandinavian publishing house in a post-war America closed to immigrants. The number of English-speaking Scandinavians continued to rise as the older generations passed from the scene and therefore the decision finally was reached to relocate the publishing house again. About 1923 the Swedish paper was transferred to Karlstad, Sweden, under the editorship of missionary

Carl J. Forsberg. The Dano-Norwegian paper was simultaneously relocated in Aalborg, Denmark, where Otto F. Linn served as missionary and editor of the paper.[7]

Organization

Evangeli Basun Publishing Company existed for some years before acquiring legal status as a corporation under the laws of the State of Minnesota in 1907. The group was using that full name in an informal sense on its papers' mastheads as early as 1903, when it applied for special federal postal rates. As a legal corporation the company's stated purpose was "to publish and disseminate religious literature in the Scandinavian language."[8] By the terms of that charter the poor received literature free of charge.

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[7] S. L. Johnson, "Field Reports," The Gospel Trumpet (hereinafter cited as GT), January 31, 1918, p. 14. Sources differ as to the precise year in which Evangeli Basun Publishing Company moved to Europe. A former Basun family member and the Yearbook of the Church of God for 1923 indicate that 1923 was the year of relocation. Another former worker and two extensive histories of the Church of God pinpoint 1920 as the date of departure. A file of Den Evangeliske Basun for 1920 is shelved in the Church of God Archives in Anderson, Indiana, and the location of the publishing house as of the end of that year according to the paper's masthead was still St. Paul Park. Therefore the company's relocation could not have occurred before 1921. A single copy of the paper dated June 1, 1921, is extant and St. Paul Park is still listed as the place of publication. It would seem then that the later date is the more likely accurate one. Cf. Lars Olsen, personal letter to Lynn Morey, quoted in Lynn Morey, "The Scandinavian Work in St. Paul Park," (Course paper: Anderson School of Theology, n.d.), p. 22; John A. Morrison, Yearbook of the Church of God, (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1923), p. 32; John W. V. Smith, The Quest for Holiness and Unity, (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1980), p. 177; C. E. Brown, When the Trumpet Sounded, (Anderson, IN: The Warner Press, 1951), p. 345; Brown relied on his correspondence with O. T. Ring for his date (another reference to the material cited in n. 3).

The corporation was organized on the broadest possible base. Any person in the Church of God who contributed to the corporation's support or who subscribed to either of its periodicals was defined as a member. Management of the corporation was vested in a seven member board of directors. Charter members of this board were Thomas Nelson (President and Manager), Otto T. Ring (Vice-President), Nels Renbeck, Emil Kreutz, all of St. Paul Park, Edwin G. Masters (Secretary and an American) of Minneapolis, Sven O. Susag of Paynesville, and Lars O. Myhre of Spaulding, Minnesota. The corporation issued no capital stock and no dues or fees were assessed any members of the corporation, "but they shall contribute at such times and in such amounts as they respectively desire."[9]

Since members of the corporation contributed to the publishing house in no systematic fashion the company's financial management operated on the basis of cash flow and donations. The Basun family was an informal communal society in which each member's personal needs were met through withdrawals from current funds. Basun family members received no salaries; some supported themselves privately or were aided by relatives.[10] In the publishing company's early days, when support was infrequent and expenses high, the temptation always existed to supplement income through secular labor. Thomas Nelson himself yielded to this temptation when he signed a three-year agreement for his services as a federal postal worker. Shortly after beginning his new duties he fell seriously ill. Even though it had been Nelson's intention to devote the wages from his new job to the publishing house, he interpreted his sudden illness as a sign of the Lord's displeasure at this compromise. As he came to believe that Christ required him to be fully occupied in the work among the Scandinavians, Nelson promised to trust God alone for his temporal needs.[11] This experience settled the issue of outside employment for Basun family members. The papers themselves stated that they did not exist "to serve money."[12] Workers denied themselves some of the comforts of life for the sake of the cause to which they were committed and so did the corporation; it refused to accept "worldly advertisements, which are nearly always overdrawn and untruthful [for] a paper which claims to uphold God's eternal truth for the sake of money."[13]

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[8] "Articles of Incorporation of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company," Book of N Bonds, Washington County, Minnesota, No. 42779, pp. 4-5. (See Appendix I for the complete text of these articles.)

[9] Ibid.

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[10] Church of God Institutions at St. Paul Park, Minnesota, (n.p.: n.d.), p. 22. File "Minnesota," Church of God Archives, Anderson, Indiana.

[11] Thomas Nelson, Veien til Frelse, Fred og det Aandelige Liv [The Way to Salvation, Peace and the Spiritual Life], (St. Paul Park, MN: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1905), pp. 287-289.

[12] N.n., n.t., Den Evangeliske Basun [The Gospel Trumpet] (hereinafter cited as DEB), January 1, 1904, p. 4.

Evangeli Basun Publishing Company did not wish to serve money, but it nonetheless needed it. The Basun family did not welcome the difficult task of requesting financial assistance. Nevertheless their duty, so they said, was to inform people when the work of the Lord suffered for want of cash. Souls, each of which was worth more than the whole world, were hanging precariously in the balance because people were withholding the means of purchasing the instrument of those souls' redemption.[14] In response to such appeals the wider Basun community contributed frequent and rather liberal donations in cash and kind.

No standard accountant's ledger could have recorded the wide variety of gifts received by the St. Paul Park community. From as far away as California came donations of provisions for the Basun family: crates of meat, sacks of wheat (which the community itself ground into flour), corn meal, sides of beef, sugar, butter, cheese, fruit--fresh and dried, "tubbs" (sic) of apple butter, even dairy cattle so the family could enjoy fresh milk.[15] Other provisions than foodstuffs were also received: a train carload of dried wood for heating, furnishings and heating equipment for the buildings, draft horses for the company's cartage needs.[16] But not all gifts were in kind. Numerous cash gifts were reported by the Basun and Trumpet. The size of these gifts ranged from $2 to $100 and, in one or two exceptional cases, even into the thousands of dollars. Gifts in the range of $25-$50 were reported with greater frequency than other amounts. Cash contributions flowed into the company treasury at a rate sufficient to enable the Basun to report in its January 15, 1907, issue a balance of $2,000.[17]

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "New Year's Greetings," DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 2.

[15] N.n., n.t., DEB, November 15, 1906, p. 4; M[artha] S[usag], "From the Office and Home," DEB, November 1, 1907, p. 4; H. A., n.t., DEB, October 15, 1906, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, March 1, 1905, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, February 1, 1907, p. 4; Martha Susag, "From the Office and Home," DEB, December 15, 1907, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, January 1, 1905, p. 4.

The little band that moved Evangeli Basun Publishing Company from Grand Forks to St. Paul Park transported substantially more equipment than had been shipped from Muscatine to North Dakota. But St. Paul Park was the site of the company's largest capital expansion. Once relocated, additional equipment was purchased to enable the company to publish a complete range of literature. The publication of Nelson's first book, Veien til Frelse, Fred og det Aandelige Liv, required the purchase of a book bindery, theretofore unnecessary in a publishing concern that had limited itself to newspapers and tracts. When the Swedish edition of the paper was begun in 1903 it obviously became necessary to purchase type in Swedish characters. Later, folding machines were also purchased, so that by 1907 a fairly complete publishing plant had been furnished. Evangeli Basun Publishing Company had travelled a long distance from the days in Muscatine when type and a wheelbarrow comprised the full inventory of the company's capital equipment.[18]

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[16] "The Lord Answers Prayer," DEB, January 15, 1905, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, December 15, 1906, p. 4.

[17] N.n., n.t., DEB, January 15, 1906, p. 4; B. Erickson, "The Lord's Work," DEB, May 1, 1906, p. 6; "From the Office and the Home," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 4; "From Home and Office," DEB, October 15, 1907, p. 4; "From the Office and the Home," DEB, November 15, 1907, p. 4. The pamphlet Church of God Institutions at St. Paul Park, Minnesota describes members of the Church of God in the

Machinery required buildings to house it. Housing for the workers and a chapel for worship were also keenly felt needs. For a group no larger than the Basun family, the publishing company invested rather heavily in real property. Printing was done in a two story brick building which the company had purchased "very cheaply." The building had been remodeled at a cost of $400 to make it suitable for the Basun family's purpose. Other buildings were added until by 1915 the community's real property included the printshop, a four story home for aged Scandinavians known as the Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest, a

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"northwest," i.e. upper-Midwest, as "mostly in moderate financial circumstances." These people were the financial resources of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company; apparently the immigrants and others who supported it were not impoverished.

[18] N.n., n.t., DEB, November 15, 1904, p. 4; "Campmeeting in St. Paul Park," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 7; "From the Office and Home," DEB, September 1, 1907, p. 4; Editor, "Greetings," (another reference to the material cited in n. 14).

twenty room frame structure which served as the Basun family's residence and hotel for out-of-town visitors to the publishing work, a three story masonry chapel-auditorium which served the St. Paul Park Church of God, the residents of the old people's home and the Basun family, and a dwelling for the general superintendent of the community's legal corporations (the publishing company and the home for the elderly). These large buildings were not rented or leased, but were the property of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. Such large structures, coupled with the company's communal organization, necessarily involved rather extensive land holdings. As early as 1905 the community secured property for the purpose of raising its own fruits and vegetables. Appeals for readers' assistance in the company's purchase of additional real estate appear frequently in the 1905, 1906, and 1907 volumes of Den Evangeliske Basun. After the construction of the Old People's Home in 1907 even more land became necessary to raise commodities for the growing Basun family.[19]

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[19] Thomas Nelson, "Our Common Work," DEB, September 15, 1905, p. 7; Church of God Institutions (another reference to the material cited in n. 10); n.n., n.t., DEB, December 1, 1904, p. 4; "New Year's Greetings," DEB, January 1, 1906, p. 1; n.n., n.t., DEB, February 1, 1905, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, November 1, 1904, p. 4; "Work on the Pavilion," DEB, June 1, 1906, p. 7; n.n., n.t., DEB, December 1, 1906, p. 4; B. E., n.t., DEB, April 15, 1906, p. 4; "Notice!," DEB, March 1, 1905, p. 7; Editor [Thomas Nelson], "Notice," DEB, May 15, 1905, p. 7; Erickson, "Lord's Work," (another reference to the material cited in n. 17); "The Work in St. Paul Park," DEB, December 15, 1904, p. 4; "New Year's Greetings," DEB, January 1, 1905, p. 2; Editor [Thomas Nelson], "The Work in St. Paul Park," DEB, October 15, 1905, p. 7.

From this religious enclave on the banks of the Mississippi Evangeli Basun Publishing Company's presses proclaimed the community's message calling for denominational Christianity's return to what the Basun family perceived as the New Testament church's standards of holiness and unity. The distribution of the literature heralding this proclamation demonstrated something of the ingenuity of the immigrants who were its driving force. Traveling religious booksellers or colporteurs were a common method of distribution. These individuals ordered consignments of literature from the publishing house and then toured the locales surrounding their homes, or occasionally wider areas, selling their books, periodicals, and pamphlets.

The publishing company also made use of the United States postal system in two ways: subscriptions were solicited either directly through interested readers or indirectly through what was called the "Free Literature Fund." On the assumption that some potential subscribers could not afford the price ($.75 annually for 24 issues in 1904, $1.75 annually for 52 issues in 1921), or that some persons were "not even interested enough to send for" the paper,[20] the publishing office established a fund to which interested individuals or congregations could contribute in support of the anonymous distribution of literature through the mails. This was a distribution device which had worked successfully at the Church of God's English language publishing house in Moundsville, West Virginia, and which therefore the Scandinavians at St. Paul Park decided to copy. Over $1,200 in pledges supporting the Free Literature Fund was received from a single congregation.[21] Funded in this manner, copies of the papers were mailed in bulk in care of local postmasters with instructions to distribute them in local patron's boxes until the supply was exhausted. Receiving unsolicited mail in this manner sometimes alarmed immigrants unfamiliar with American postal procedures. Den Evangeliske Basun found it necessary to print rather frequently a notice intended to calm such fears. To those afraid of taking from the post office items which they had not ordered the Basun explained that there was no need for alarm; another had subscribed for them and no remittance was necessary.[22]

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[20] Thomas Nelson, "A Free Literature Fund," DEB, October 15, 1906, p. 4.

Regular Basun subscribers were encouraged to keep samples of the literature with them at all times, constantly ready to spread the message of holiness and unity. These exhortations came from the publishing office and the Basun family apparently practiced what it preached. In 1906 the publishing house workers took an excursion to Minnehaha Park in Minneapolis. Not failing to combine the Lord's business with pleasure, one worker reported that the group had

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[21] Ibid.

[22] N.n., n.t., DEB, January 15, 1905, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 1.

". . . enjoyed a much needed day's holiday in God's beautiful nature, along with distributing literature to others who also enjoyed the day's beauty out there."[23] The workers also visited the residents of the Minnesota State Old Soldiers' Home adjacent to the park, once again distributing the papers and tracts they themselves had published.

Evangeli Basun Publishing Company also distributed its products by means of advertisement in its own newspapers, the Basun and Trumpet. These advertisements reveal a modest level of sophistication in the company's merchandising techniques. The most frequently applied of these techniques was the "Three Month Offer." When first attempted, this offer of a three month subscription to either of the newspapers for ten cents was hoped to generate one thousand new subscriptions. In that initial drive something like seven hundred subscribers actually were enrolled.[24] The company employed variations of this theme, offering a free book as a bonus for each new subscription or for direct contributions of one dollar or more.[25]

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[23] H. A., n.t., DEB, October 15, 1920, p. 4; Nels Renbeck, "Cast Your Bread Upon the Waters," DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 4.

[24] N.n., n.t., DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 4. The company sometimes offered premiums in conjunction with its promotions. An advertisement in the November 15, 1904 issue of Den Evangeliske Basun offered a free copy of Nelson's new book, Veien til Frelse, Fred og det Aandelige Liv, to any person who collected 50 new subscriptions, a family Bible to anyone soliciting 80 new readers, and a pocket Bible with gilt edges to anyone gathering as many as 100 subscriptions. The paper was proud to add that not only were the premiums free, but the company paid the postage.

Another of the publishing company's methods for merchandising its literature was through the manufacture and sale of the Scandinavian Almanac. Readers were encouraged to give these as New Year's remembrances, for one reason because almanacs "will be accepted where tracts and papers will be thrown away." The almanacs contained Bible verses and advertisements for holiness literature. The Basun family's intention behind this project was to familiarize those unacquainted with Guds Menighed with its message and "encourage many . . . to send for literature."[26]

Ethnic groups other than Scandinavian appear in some Evangeliske Basun advertisements or reports of literature distribution. Frequent announcement was made of the availability of Die Evangeliums Posaune, published by the German department of the Gospel Trumpet Company. Theologically cautious potential subscribers to the German paper could take comfort in the Basun's assurance that "its doctrine is in agreement with Den Evangeliske Basun."[27] The publishing company also undertook a mission to Hungarian immigrants living in the Como Park district of St. Paul. A Hungarian named Andrew Kandler had been converted to the message of the Church of God under the preaching of William Ebel in Winnipeg, Manitoba. After moving to St. Paul he wrote the Gospel Trumpet Company for instructions on how to contact Church of God people living in the Twin Cities. He was referred to Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, which the English language movement considered one of its "missionary homes." Kandler contacted the St. Paul Park group, meetings were begun among his fellow Hungarians and before long Martha Susag announced that the publishing house was setting type for a new Hungarian songbook.[28]

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[25] N.n., n.t., DEB, June 1, 1905, p. 4; Nelson, "Common Work," (another reference to the material cited in n. 19).

[26] "Scandinavian Almanac," DEB, December 1, 1905, p. 7

[27] "Die Evangeliums Posaune," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 7.

Community

During the decade of the 1890's Scandinavian names began appearing in the testimony columns of the Church of God's weekly paper, The Gospel Trumpet. Jens M. Welling, who later was to spend six years in the English language publishing house before bringing his skills to St. Paul Park in 1907, wrote this testimony which was printed in the Trumpet in 1895:

> I for the first time will write my testimony, feeling it will be to the glory of God. I am enjoying a full salvation in the blood of Jesus. The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. I ask the prayers of the saints that I may be found faithful and trusting in Jesus.[29]

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[28] C. G. Neils, "From the Workfield," DEB, October 15, 1906, pp. 5-6; M[artha] S[usag], "From the Office and the Home," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 4.

[29] Jens M. Welling, "Testimonies," GT, January 31, 1895, n.p.

Two weeks later Welling's brother, Andrew, had a similar testimony published.[30] From Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, a Danish immigrant named U. K. Thaanum wrote the Gospel Trumpet Company requesting the translation of their literature into his own language. Thaanum claimed his English was poor, but he also expressed his desire ". . . to spread the light of the world, Jesus my Savior, among my countrymen."[31] In that same year of 1895 The Gospel Trumpet published a report submitted by a young evangelist conducting his first religious meetings. His name was Thomas Nelson, and six years after reporting his first bit of "news from the field" he founded the publishing company whose intention it was to meet the needs of people like U. K. Thaanum.

Constructing even a sketchy biography of key leaders within the Basun family is a difficult task. They felt no need to record significant events in the life of the community. Their individual identities were in a sense absorbed into a group identity with Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. In their minds the mission of the company was far more important than the identification or notice of personalities within the group. Along with the subordination of the individual to the group was the Basun family's belief that the Holy Spirit was their real leader. No individual within the group would have accepted the title of leader or founder;

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[30] Andrew Welling, "Testimonies, GT, February 14, 1895, n.p.

[31] U. K. Thaanum, "Testimonies," GT, April 18, 1895, n.p.

from its inception the publishing work had been under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. For these reasons the persons connected with Evangeli Basun Publishing Company wrote very little about themselves, and what they did write was often incidental to their fundamental reason for writing--to spread the message of the restoration of the New Testament church. Nevertheless, it is important to reconstruct as best as possible the biographical details of the lives of some of the group's leaders and other representative figures.

Despite _Guds Menighed's_ theology of Holy Spirit leadership Thomas Nelson (1872-1946) was the founder, editor, and inspirational leader of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. He was born on the island of Mors, Denmark, and emigrated to the United States some time between the ages of fourteen and nineteen.[32] Nelson said very little about his family and his life in Denmark. In fact his only description of either of his parents is one he gives of his mother, who he explained was "very handy in making medicines. I well remember having to dig fishworms for mother's medicines."[33]

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[32] Esther Ikast Fair, "The Church of God's Road to Denmark," (mimeographed, n.d.), p. 9, Church of God Archives, Anderson, Indiana. In his book _Home, Health and Success_, Nelson says he lived in Denmark for nineteen years, but does not indicate whether his missionary tour is included in that total. His mission to Denmark could not have been of more than five years' duration, thus the estimate of his age at emigration at somewhere between the ages of fourteen and nineteen.

[33] Thomas Nelson, _Home Health and Success_, (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1908), p. 474.

Nelson's religious conversion occurred after immigration. During the summer of 1893 he became dissatisfied with his "life of sin." He attended meetings of a group other than the Church of God, but which he never identified. As a result of those meetings he "took possession of a confession" and joined that denomination. His sense of spiritual turmoil did not abate and later Nelson claimed it was not until 1894 that his hunger for salvation was satisfied. Apparently he passed through two crisis experiences, for he said that when he was "first saved and converted to God," he was unaware of the possibility of a second experience of grace in sanctification. By January of 1895 he also claimed this experience.[34]

The precise details of Nelson's pilgrimage into association with the group which came to be known as the Church of God Reformation Movement are nowhere mentioned in the extant literature. All that is certain is that Nelson and another man named Charlie Akers held their first evangelistic meetings in connection with the Church of God January 13-22, 1895, at Fairport, Iowa. The two men described themselves as "both young and new in the work," but they enjoyed a modest success in their maiden effort: seven conversions and eighteen consecrations for sanctification.[35]

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[34] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 62-63; 123.

[35] Thomas Nelson and Charlie Akers, "News from the Field," GT, February 7, 1895, n.p.

In April the Nelson-Akers team was in Pine Mills, Iowa, denouncing "sect Babylon," as they put it. But before the end of that month the Gospel Trumpet office had received Nelson's report that he had arrived in Denmark. There, he said, he was in a "wilderness of sin." Later he had reported that he had "never seen such darkness in any of the sects in America as these here in Denmark." While there Nelson employed all of his time in missionary work. Even his free time was spent preparing weapons for the onslaught against sin, writing, translating, and composing over eighty songs.[36]

Nelson's name does not appear again in the field reports of The Gospel Trumpet until 1900, when he reported a recently concluded evangelistic tour among Scandinavian immigrants around Hutchinson, Norway Lake, and Irving, Minnesota. But he must have been in the United States no later than 1899 for in that year he co-edited a Dano-Norwegian songbook that was published in Chicago. Prior to his missionary trip to Denmark Nelson had labored among English-speaking people. However, after his return to America he began expressing his feeling that God wanted him to work among Scandinavian immigrants. As Nelson put it, "My heart's desire is to spend and be spent among my countrymen, and I believe God will gather unto himself a people among them that will stand firm for the whole truth."[37]

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[36] "News from the Field," GT, May 2, 1895, n.p.; Thomas Nelson, a letter from Seierslev, Nykjobing, Denmark, in "News from the Field," GT, May 16, 1895, n.p.

The Lord's gathering seems to have been underway even as Nelson wrote of his heart's desire. Mention has already been made of the testimonies in The Gospel Trumpet by the Welling brothers and U. K. Thaanum. In 1900 other testimonies were published by individuals who would assume significant roles within "the Scandinavian work," as it came to be known. August L. Christoffersen claimed salvation and sanctification in Christ and testified to the Lord's goodness in taking away all of his "old unclean habits."[38] More important to the development of Guds Menighed was the appeal of Mrs. S. O. Susag from Irving, Minnesota, requesting "Holy Ghost ministers" to come to her Norwegian community and preach in the Scandinavian languages. For herself the English of The Gospel Trumpet and the Church of God songbooks was not overly difficult. But she was also translating some of the songs from these books into Norwegian.[39]

American Church of God evangelists in the upper Midwest simultaneously envisioned a more specifically defined ministry among Scandinavian immigrants. In a lengthy report to The Gospel Trumpet dated April 2, 1900, D. O. Teasley saw a "vast field of labor" opening up in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas, especially among Scandinavian-speaking peoples. Teasley built this case on the 1890 federal census figures which identified nearly 422,000 foreign-born Scandinavians in the five states mentioned above. His overriding concern was the absence of any literature which these people could read in their mother tongues. "A great many of them speak and read English, but the vocabulary used in everyday life is so different from the one used in religious literature, that they fail to get the real benefit. There are also some that cannot speak a word of English who must be reached with this glorious light . . . ."[40]

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[37] Thomas Nelson, "News from the Field," GT, April 26, 1900, p. 5.

[38] August L. Christoffersen, "Testimonies," GT, August 9, 1900, p. 6.

[39] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Testimonies," GT, March 29, 1900, p. 6.

The same month that Teasley's appeal for Scandinavian literature appeared in The Gospel Trumpet Thomas Nelson wrote of his growing interest in meeting this particular need. Apparently he had already promised the publication of religious tracts in the Scandinavian languages. Unable to make good his promise, Nelson offered to repay money he had accepted as advance payment on the tracts or substitute his Dano-Norwegian songbooks in their place.[41] All the while evangelistic meetings among immigrant settlers continued to be conducted in Minnesota and North Dakota and "great interest was manifested in Scandinavian literature." Nelson's only response for the moment was to say, "Let us hold on to God and believe Him for the desire of our hearts."[42]

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[40] D. O. Teasley, "News from the Field," GT, April 12, 1900, p. 5.

[41] Nelson, "News," (another reference to the material cited in n. 37).

In September, 1900, The Gospel Trumpet carried Thomas Nelson's stated intention finally to begin publication of a Scandinavian periodical. In part, the announcement read:

> For some time I have felt the great need of Scandinavian literature, and the brethren at the Trumpet office have also realized this need, and it has long been the wish and earnest prayer of the Scandinavian brethren, to whom I now especially write, that we should have a paper and literature in our own language. This has not been a selfish desire nor a paper proceeding from selfish motive, for most of the brethren in this country can understand the English language and are glad to read the Trumpet literature, but [from] an earnest desire to spread the truth among the Scandinavian people in this country as well as in the old country.[43]

Some promise of modest financial support existed, but two workers were needed, ". . . one with a fair education in our language and one who can set type." The requirement of prior experience was not stringently imposed, for Nelson also said to aspiring typesetters, "But if you do not understand typesetting and feel led to come, let me hear from you anyway."[44] On that basis Evangeli Basun Publishing Company began operations in 1901.

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[42] Thomas Nelson, "News from the Field," GT, August 16, 1900, p. 5.

[43] Thomas Nelson, "Scandinavian Literature," GT, September 20, 1900, pp. 4-5.

Nelson was the catalyst in the organization. He was a person with little or no formal education and rather indiscriminate reading tastes. The books he quotes in his own writings are few and on the fringes of scholarship. The Bible and the literature of the Church of God clearly were his main sources of inspiration and authority. Nelson was also a man of deep piety,[45] limitless energy, and unbounded vision. Under his direction the publishing company grew from a tiny operation in 1901 into a legal corporation holding various assets approaching a value of $25,000 in 1917. This material achievement was not accomplished without considerable sacrifice on Nelson's part. In 1916 his health deteriorated to the point where it became necessary to relieve him of his managerial posts. A year and a half later he resumed those duties: manager of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, editor of Den Evangeliske Basun, superintendent of the Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest, and pastor of the local congregation.[46] The energy needed to sustain such a commitment was undergirded by a simple faith that recognized no limits to the realization of its vision. Nelson expressed his faith in a personal testimony inserted in his first book:

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Nelson's piety is reflected in these lines from his gospel song, "Sjaelens Tilflugt" [The Soul's Refuge]: You poured out your blood for me / And I am your possession / I am dependent upon you. / You alone make me, / For without you I am nothing. / O abide with me, dear Master, / With your Spirit and your Word / You are my refuge on earth. / C. T. Langeson and Thomas Nelson, Den Evangeliske Sanger [The Gospel Singer], (Chicago: R. Egebergh, 1899, pp. 80-81.

> And to his praise and honor I can say that he has cared better for me and my family, as well as the printing concern, than I in any manner could have done. He has not only given us food and clothing and a home for my family, but he has provided many thousand dollars for the printing concern, so that the cause constantly advances. And now when we lack something we unite in prayer to God for it, and he has always opened the way for us. From time to time we have had to pay several hundred dollars without knowing where it should come from. But we do not worry ourselves over it, but go to our Father in heaven who knows we have need. So it goes whether to pray and trust for great sums or small things, accordingly as we need for ourselves and for our calling in the Lord's service.[47]

If little may be stated confidently of Thomas Nelson's origins in Denmark and his early life in the United States, much of the same obscurity shrouds his last years. The publishing company was moved to Denmark about 1923 but Nelson did not accompany it. The Yearbook of the Church of God did not list his name in either the 1921 or 1922 editions. In 1923 he was listed as a prospective missionary to Scandinavia, but that is the final volume of the yearbook in which his name appears. In her history of the Church of God in Minnesota Anna E. Koglin writes that Nelson moved to

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[46] S. L. Johnson, "Field Reports," GT, October 26, 1916, p. 14; S. L. Johnson, "Field Reports," GT January 31, 1918, p. 15.

[47] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 290.

Redwood City, California in 1919 where he combined a pastorate with a new occupation as a land developer.

Nelson did indeed move to California, but not in 1919. A former member of the heavily Norwegian Church of God in Montevideo, Minnesota recalls that Nelson took the pastorate there in 1922. He had come to Montevideo to heal a rift between two factions of the congregation. Nelson's efforts failed and the congregation split. He remained as pastor of one of the two new congregations and was judged by his fellow ministers to be out of fellowship with the Church of God. Nelson remained in Montevideo until 1924 and it was from that town that he moved to Redwood City, California.[48] No Church of God yearbook record of any pastoral activity there exists. Nelson died in California in 1946.

Next to Thomas Nelson the person of greatest significance in the life of Guds Menighed was Sven O. Susag (1862-1952), whose spiritual quest in America has already been recounted. Susag was born in Stenkjaer, Norway, to parents he described as not having "given their hearts to God, yet they taught us to live right."[49] Although his grandmother, he said, was a "very godly woman," the Susag family attended only one worship service a month. Other Sundays they sang hymns and listened to sermons read by the father from a collection;[50] Susag did not indicate whether the Bible was an important element in this simple family worship. On the basis of this fragmentary evidence no certain conclusion about the Susag family's piety seems warranted. One might only hazard the guess that these people were nominal members of the Norwegian state church and perhaps on the fringes of the Norwegian pietist movement of the nineteenth century.

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[48] Carl Nelson, interview, Minneapolis, Minnesota, December 22, 1981.

[49] Susag, Personal Experiences, pp. 24-25.

Susag was confirmed at the age of fifteen, but prior to this major event in Lutheran piety he seems to have been deviating already from traditional religious expressions. Looking back on those years the adult Susag recalled hearing a voice calling him to the ministry while simultaneously chiding him, at age eleven, for his bad behavior. From his vantage point as an itinerant revivalist Susag interpreted the voice of his boyhood as that of the the Holy Spirit, but the youthful Susag did not recognize it. Prior to receiving the Lord's Supper for the first time and now in adolescence, he was assailed by feelings of guilt and begged forgiveness for participating in communion with no spiritual conviction rather than disgrace his family by refraining from communicating. Still troubled by his conscience, Susag concluded that Norway was no place to improve his moral and spiritual condition so he decided to sail for America. He left Trondheim on April 27, 1881, aboard the Tasso, bound first for England and then the United States.[51]

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[50] Ibid. [51] Ibid., p. 154.

After their conversions Susag and his wife, Martha (1859- ?), quickly assumed positions of leadership in Guds Menighed. Sven became the group's most widely know itinerant, traversing the Atlantic Ocean a total of sixteen times on missionary ventures. Both of the Susags were particularly strong advocates of the Church of God's teaching and practice of faith healing. Accounts of miraculous cures and other special manifestations of the Holy Spirit sprinkle the pages of Sven's reminiscences, and in the articles she wrote for Den Evangeliske Basun Martha often supplied testimonies of healings within her family or among her acquaintances. But she did not restrict the subjects of her religious journalism to testimonies of divine healing. Central theological themes, among them the doctrines of justification, sanctification and the church, also received detailed comment from her. Martha Susag was also an unrelenting critic of denominational division in Christianity. She enthusiastically "thrashed Babylon" (the Church of God's term for their attacks on what they called the "denominational system") in a blunt and occasionally caustic style.[52]

Sven and Martha Susag were bilingual, as were all the leaders of Guds Menighed. The Susags delivered sermons in English worship services as well as Scandinavian, and both corresponded with the English language Gospel Trumpet in addition to their regular and numerous contributions to the Scandinavian papers. Sven even gained some noteriety in the Church of God as a preacher in English services. On one occasion Scandinavian and English meetings were running concurrently at the 74th Street Church of God in Chicago. According to Susag's report of those meetings many souls were being saved in the Scandinavian meetings but none in the English. The American pastor, E. A. Reardon, learned of the good services going on upstairs and requested Susag to preach in the English language meeting. He did and at the conclusion of his sermon ". . . there were forty-two at the altar crying for mercy."[53] Once the Scandinavian publishing concern was moved to Europe Sven Susag continued his ministry exclusively in English, illustrating his ability to function as a fullly assimilated immigrant. This adaptability is also demonstrated in Mrs. Susag's later life. In 1936 she served as clerk of her local schoolboard while her brother served as chairman.[54] Although their bilingual abilities facilitated the entry of the Susags into American society, their association with Guds Menighed also isolated them. Both of them recount incidents in which they were the targets of violence at the hands of mobs angered by the content of their preaching. Isolation from family was a more painful, if less dangerous, form of separation from past traditions and relationships. After Sven and his wife were converted his family cut off all communication with them for several years.[55]

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[52] E.g., "The Apostacy," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 2.

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[53] Susag, Personal Experiences, pp. 24-25.

[54] Ibid., p. 127.

Nels (1859-1934) and Edel (1856-1934) Renbeck spent their last twenty-five years as missionaries to their native Denmark. Their importance here lies in the rather full account Edel Renbeck gave of their passage from Danish Lutheranism to the Church of God and the work of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. She was born in Sallum parish, Vendsyssel, and baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran church. Her pastor must have been untouched by the pietistic revivals within nineteenth century Danish Lutheranism, for Mrs. Renbeck said he called his people "good Christians" even though they attended "one party after another and dance and play cards."[56] The Renbecks were dissatisfied with this form of Christianity and thus were easily attracted to the preaching of people Mrs. Renbeck identified only as "children of God" who visited the Renbecks' parish. Vendsyssel is a district of Denmark that has been described as a nineteenth century "free church paradise." Little social contact brightened the lives of scattered villagers. Parishes were very large and pastors often had several charges. The primitive area made for difficult transportation and a sparse economy. Wages in the district were so low that bishop's chairs often were vacant.[57] Vendsyssel was an ideal setting for pietists.

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[55] Ibid., p. 16, p. 109.

[56] Edel Renbeck, "How Jesus Has Led Me," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 8.

In these circumstances the Renbecks were converted to an unspecified form of Lutheran pietism, bidding "farewell to sin and the world" in the process. Shortly after their conversions they came under the criticism of family and neighbors for their new religious views. When these relationships broke down completely Edel Renbeck told her husband, "No longer have I any father or mother. Let's sell our home and go to America."[58] They followed through on Edel's suggestion and ultimately settled in Nebraska, where they soon joined a church of like-minded individuals, but which Mrs. Renbeck again fails to identify specifically. Later they moved to Wheatland, North Dakota, where they entered fellowship with the Church of God in 1897.

The Renbecks made a two-stage transition from the Danish Folk Church to the Church of God, a transition which at each stage carried them further in the direction of the Church of God's radical expression of Christianity. Before emigration from Denmark they had already embraced a form of Lutheran pietism. Upon settlement in America they moved within the orbit of American pietism and from that stage into the Church of God and its Scandinavian sub-group, Guds Menighed. Long before their assocation with Evangeli Basun

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[57] P. G. Lindhart, Den Danske Kirkes Historie, VII, (København: Nordisk Forlag, 1958), pp. 33-34.

[58] Renbeck, "How Jesus," (another reference to the material cited in n. 56).

Publishing Company Nels and Edel Renbeck had become disaffected with Lutheran Christianity.

Nels Renbeck was ordained in 1907 at the St. Paul Park campmeeting.[59] In that same year he was elected secretary-treasurer of the Basun family's home for the aged and also a charter member of the board of directors of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. In 1909 he and his wife returned to Denmark in order to spread the news of Guds Menighed. There they remained for the rest of their lives.

Fragmentary accounts of the lives of other early Basun family members repeat some of the details found in the stories of Nelson, the Susags, and the Renbecks. Carl J. Forsberg (1878-1973) was born in Simonstorp, Östergötland, Sweden. At age 23 he immigrated, joining his younger brother, Axel, and their uncle on the latter's farm near Stoneboro, Pennsylvania. Forsberg's religious life in Sweden had been within the traditional confines of the Lutheran state church in which he was confirmed at age 14. Apparently his religious convictions were not firmly held for he described himself later as an "unbeliever in Christianity" during his first years in America.[60] Forsberg's brother, Axel, was the first to associate with the Church of God, experiencing a conversion at meetings held near

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[59] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Healed of Sore Eyes," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 8.

[60] Carl J. Forsberg, "Autobiography of Carl J. Forsberg," p. 9, Church of God Archives, Anderson, Indiana.

Stoneboro. Under his guidance Carl began attending meetings and also experienced a revivalistic conversion in 1906. The same year Carl traveled to the Church of God Missionary home in New York City in order to be trained as a gospel worker. At that time D. O. Teasley was the head of the missionary home and it does not seem unlikely that Teasley would have encouraged Forsberg to become involved with the Scandinavian center in St. Paul Park, especially given the former's interest in the Scandinavian immigrant group. The Basun leadership contacted Forsberg, requesting him to sail to Sweden in behalf of the literature they were shipping to Scandinavia. Forsberg agreed and thus began his years of association with Guds Menighed: 1910-1914, editor of the Swedish language paper; 1914-1918, missionary in Sweden; 1918-1920, editor again and pastor of the English language Church of God in St. Paul; 1920-1927, missionary in Sweden and Denmark. In 1927 Forsberg and his wife, Laura, returned to the United States and took up farming near New Castle,Pennsylvania. From there he and his family moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1943. After his return from Europe he did not again take up a full-time pastoral ministry.

Unlike Carl Forsberg, Otto T. Ring (1877-1964) did not come into the Church of God from agnosticism. Like the Renbecks, his transition to the Church of God was accomplished in stages, at least one intermediate step apparently existing between his native Swedish Lutheranism and his ultimate home in Guds Menighed. Ring does not identify that intermediate stage, describing himself only as a "strong believer in a literal reign by Christ."[61] This may be a reference to a form of millenialism, which Ring correctly understood to be opposed by the amillenial Church of God group. Ring and several others in the Scandinavian community around Norway Lake, Minnesota began reading The Gospel Trumpet, the first copy of which had been handed to a young man named Olof Lundy by an unidentified gospel worker. Thomas Nelson was invited to preach at nearby Belgrade, and "a goodly number embraced the Truth and came out for the Bible Church of God."[62] Among that number was O. T. Ring. He went on to join the first publishing effort at Muscatine, Iowa, and served as editor of the Swedish Evangelii Trumpet. Ring also took pastorates in areas of South Dakota and Minnesota where large Scandinavian populations resided. When the Basun family disbanded Ring accepted pastoral assignments in the English language Church of God, ending his career in Seattle, Washington.

Ring's co-worker in the establishment of Evangelii Trumpet was Charles Grant (1871- ?). Grant's parents had been converted to the Mission Covenant[63] before he was born in Smoland, Sweden. Thus he grew up in a home where family worship and Bible reading were daily elements of the family routine. Grant experienced a religious conversion at an early age, only to fall away from Christianity when he became a young man. However, he experienced a second conversion in early adulthood. Grant immigrated in 1898 in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Peder Pederson. After their arrival in the United States all three of them began work as ministers in the Mission Covenant in Hoboken, New Jersey. When Grant began seeking the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace the Pedersons joined him in his spiritual quest and the trio left the Mission Covenant when it became clear that their opinions were unwelcome there. About 1900 Grant and the Pedersons came into contact with the Church of God. An anonymous man who spoke Norwegian left a copy of The Gospel Trumpet at Grant's Hoboken boarding house. He took out a subscription and thus entered the Church of God movement. Along with the Peder Pedersons he served a "mostly Scandinavian" congregation in Hoboken. Grant traveled to St. Paul Park for a brief stay to assist O. T. Ring in the establishment of the Swedish paper. After several months he returned east until 1913, when he left the United States

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[61] Ring, letter, (another reference to the material cited in n. 3).

[62] Ibid.

[63] The Swedish Mission Covenant was founded in Stockholm in 1878 by representatives of various Swedish mission societies. Decidedly free church in spirit, the Mission Covenant's most noted leader was Peter Paul Waldenström (1838-1917), editor of the religious paper

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Pietisten, and a reputed heretic for his doctrine of the atonement, an interpretation which George M. Stephenson says differed from that of the state church "only in emphasis and terminology." George M. Stephenson, Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932); reprint ed., (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), pp. 106-110.

for Canada and more gospel work in the western provinces.[64]

Not all Scandinavian immigrants who accepted the message of the Church of God became associated with the Scandinavian center at St. Paul Park. Axel Engstrom, Carl Forsberg's younger brother, immigrated before Carl and underwent conversion at approximately the same time. But Axel never associated with Guds Menighed. He remained a dedicated lay supporter of the English language Church of God throughout his long life.[65] Frank Bengtson emigrated from Sweden in 1893. His family had been Lutherans there, but joined the Mission Covenant upon their settlement near Swede Point, Iowa. Bengtson came into the Church of God at a tent meeting near Swede Point and through his leadership the nucleus of a church began meeting in his home. This English language congregation then moved into a nearby schoolhouse and later became a church in Madrid, Iowa. Bengtson's associations always were with American congregations.[66] Katharine Nelson was born in Denmark but left there ultimately to settle in Oakland, California. In an effort to relieve her "consumption" she moved to Redlands, where she encountered some members of the Church of God movement. They told her of the "truth of the full gospel" which she accepted.[67] Reports in The Gospel Trumpet also tell of multi-national religious meetings where ethnic differences were minimized. J. R. Hale reported one such meeting in St. Louis, Missouri:

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[64] Charles A. Grant, personal letter to C. E. Brown, December 17, 1949, C. E. Brown correspondence, Church of God Archives, Anderson, Indiana.

[65] Axel E. Engstrom, "Personal Testimony of A. E. Engstrom," pamphlet file, Church of God Archives, Anderson, Indiana.

[66] Opal C. Bengtson, interview, Anderson, Indiana, July 18, 1978.

> It was glorious to see and feel the oneness of his children as we came together for worship three times a day. By nationality there were English, Scotch, Dutch, Irish, Swede, Bohemian, and others; but Christ was "all in all."[68]

The religious backgrounds of the immigrants who affiliated with the Church of God and Guds Menighed defies easy generalization. For some those backgrounds were within the Scandinavian state churches. Others were pietists before leaving Europe. Still others joined denominations in America after immigration but before joining the Church of God in general or Guds Menighed specifically. In other words, for some Scandinavians the passage from Lutheranism to Guds Menighed was immediate; for others it was mediated through a succession of transitions.

Oscar Handlin's sensitive portrayal of American immigrant life, The Uprooted, notes the differences and similarities of immigrants who remained loyal to the traditional faiths of their homelands and immigrants who practiced a dissenting religion. The former took for granted their membership in a fixed community of authority and status. The latter stressed a "continuing process of conversion and dedication." Both were forced to reconstruct their groups once on American soil.[69] The transition from established church to a group such as the Church of God demanded more of immigrants who made that particular switch than did the simple exchange of dissenting groups. Both types of transitions are found among the Scandinavians who populated Guds Menighed. For some of those there was a greater sacrifice of past loyalties and commitments than there was for others. But from whichever source the immigrants came, the group loyalty of Guds Menighed truly was remarkable.

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[67] "Obituary," GT, August 8, 1908, p. 14.

[68] J. R. Hale, "News from the Field," GT, February 22, 1900, p. 5.

Life Together

The men and women who came to St. Paul Park to publish literature for their Scandinavian countrymen referred to themselves as the Basun "family" and this study follows them in that usage. Anna Koglin describes the publishing house workers as a "happy family."[70] In 1907 approximately twenty-five workers comprised this immediate family, "in honor preferring one another."[71] Men and women occupied the same building and although no "doors existed between the halls on which their rooms were located," there were no reprimands for "any kind of conduct."[72]

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[69] Oscar Handlin, The Uprooted, 2d. ed., enl., (Boston: Little, Brown and Comapny, 1973), p. 111.

[70] Anna E. Koglin, personal letter to Lynn R. Morey, quoted in Morey, "Scandinavian Work," (another reference to the material cited in n. 7), p. 12.

[71] E. E. Torpen, "A Short Description of the Basun Home," DEB, September 1, 1907, p. 6.

The Basun family's day began at 5:30 and religious services dominated the workers' schedules: morning worship in English at 6:00, evening worship in Scandinavian. On Sundays there were three services in addition to Sunday School. Tuesday evenings workers attended cottage prayer-meetings in local homes, and the following evening they joined together for a combined prayer-meeting at the chapel. Friday evenings were reserved for Scandinavian meetings.[73]

Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was a communal society. Instead of receiving regular wages workers simply requested funds as needed for clothing or travel. The home matron received financial requests from female workers and the home manager (usually the matron's husband) handled the requests of the males. Some workers occupied skilled positions in the printshop such as bookbinders or linotype operators. Others were employed as clerical office staff while still others supported the main work of printing and distribution as carpenters or fieldhands. Whether skilled or unskilled, the workers in the Basun family lived in an egalitarian society.[74] The entire community took meals in common and the table fare was quite simple, being supplied through contributions and the produce of the family's own gardens.

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[72] Koglin, letter, (another reference to the material cited in n. 13).

[73] Ibid.

[74] N.n., n.t., DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 4.

A shared commitment to the mission of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was an element that bonded the individuals of the *Basun* family together in a communal society. The workers believed that literature served a particularly important role in the accomplishment of *Guds Menighed's* purpose. Religious literature could be mailed to locales inaccessible to a traveling preacher. It was no substitute for preaching, but literature "can instruct many who perhaps could not hear one sermon."[75] Since people could be led into the Kingdom of God through reading "holy literature," children of God had a duty to "bring it to as many as possible."[76] God would demand a strict accounting of all who had left undone any part of their duty.[77]

Coupled with their belief in literature's power to effect spiritual renewal was a special sensitivity to what the *Basun* family perceived as the spiritually benighted condition of Scandinavians. The true children of God among this immigrant group were said to be weary of the religious confusion "which is found among our people."[78] "Poor Scandinavians" were thought to be "longing for light and hungering for righteousness in many places in the world,"[79] and the Basun family published the materials which would give those longing hearts what they most desired--the essential doctrines of the Bible.[80] Basun family members could echo the words of the New Jersey gospel worker Peder Pederson when he said, "God has lain on my heart my own people, that is to say, our own countrymen, and has called me to walk among them with all the grace and wisdom he has given me."[81]

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[75] Nels Renbeck, "An Encouragement," *DEB*, July 15, 1907, p. 2; "10 Cent Offer," *DEB*, November 15, 1904, p. 6; Nels Renbeck, "So Through All Waters," *DEB*, August 1, 1906, p. 5.

[76] M[artha] S[usag], n.t., *DEB*, February 15, 1907, p. 4.

[77] Editor [Thomas Nelson], n.t., *DEB*, February 15, 1906, p. 4.

Basun workers were also motivated by their sense of special calling to their mission; the work in which they were engaged was not their own invention but the product of God's activity in history. They were convinced that God had brought them together to proclaim the message of his true church among the Scandinavian people of America and Europe. After a year in the Basun family Carl Olsen testified, "I am glad to say that this work is of God and that the Lord blesses us both in soul and body, and gives us all we need."[82] In his New Year's greeting for 1907 Thomas Nelson bespoke this attitude for the entire community:

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[78] "Campmeeting in St. Paul Park," DEB, February 15, 1906, p. 4.

[79] A. S., "From the Office and the Home," DEB, December 1, 1907, p. 4.

[80] Micala Simonsen, "Preface," to Thomas Nelson, Vaesentlige Bibel Emner, [Essential Bible Doctrines], (St. Paul Park: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1915), p. 5.

[81] P. Pederson, "Testimonies," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 6.

> With openness and trust in God we take up the new year's responsibilities and duties because we know "that hitherto the Lord has helped us" and he himself has said, "I will in no wise release you or forsake you." We know not what the new year shall bring, but we know that the Lord will employ each of his children for the activity he has laid upon us; he will give victory in temptation, comfort in sorrow, and strength in opposition.[83]

To have engaged in the Lord's work for money, honor, or influence was wrong and ultimately unsatisfying. If God was to bless the work the motive of the workers could be nothing other than to be "driven by the love of God."[84]

The special object of God's attention as it was focused in the work of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was the Scandinavian people. The company's goal was "to do God's will and glorify his name and be a blessing to our fellowman, especially our Scandinavian people, among which the Lord has called us to work."[85] To some of those people was addressed the Basun's message of salvation and sanctification, but the paper also believed that scattered over the earth were upright souls who would receive the truth printed in its pages if only there existed some means of informing them. Guds Menighed believed that other spiritually famished souls no longer could subsist on the meager diet fed to them in denominational Christianity. So, Basun worker Halfdan Stay asked rhetorically, "Shall we stand and look on all this, except to try to aid the need among our Scandinavian people?"[86]

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[82] Carl J. Olsen, "Testimonies," DEB, June 1, 1905, p. 5.

[83] Editor, [Thomas Nelson], "New Year's Greetings," DEB, January 1, 1907, p. 1.

[84] "The Church of God," DEB, October 15, 1906, p. 2.

[85] N.n., n.t., DEB, March 1, 1905, p. 4.

The Basun family's commitment to a program of literature evangelism as well as the other facets of its ministry was reinforced by their confidence that their work was God's work. In turn their belief that they were cooperating with God in his enterprise was strengthened by the Church of God's belief that it was living through the last days of history as God worked to restore his church before the final judgment. The imminent return of Christ lent an apocalyptic urgency to the task of saving Scandinavians:

> Brothers and sisters! The harvest is at hand; soon Jesus will return; soon we will stand before his judgment seat to receive our reward for the short time we have lived for him and his cause. We are in the evening time of the time's (sic) day, and the Sun of grace and righteousness, Jesus, the Light of the world, now casts his last golden rays out over a lost and corrupt world. God sends out his true witnesses to proclaim a whole gospel to men, whereby the elect are gathered from Babylon to Zion and the few sinners who still will let themselves are brought to the fountain which is opened against sin and impurity. Only some few instants and heaven and earth will

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[86] Halfdan Stay, "Work While it is Day, Before the Night Comes," DEB, March 15, 1907, p. 4; L. Christoffersen, "Jesus' Suffering," DEB, March 15, 1905, p. 3.

> pass away, the elements will be consumed in fire, the ungodly will go to eternal perdition, and all will be past.[87]

The influence of an apocalyptic mentality surely reinforced the group cohesiveness of the Basun family. In expectation of the imminent return of the Lord extra demands could be imposed upon individuals and those social and financial demands could be tolerated in light of that expectation. And yet the Basun family did not experience the demands of communal living as hardships. Rather than complain of deprivation Basun workers testified to their happiness and pleasure at being among the people of God. The blessings of living among the "saved and sanctified" more than compensated for the absence of the vain things of the world. Thus Halfdan Stay could write: "Instead of sin and darkness I now have happiness and joy and enjoy prospects for the future both here in this world and in eternity."[88] On the basis of both its sense of apocalyptic urgency and the sincere pleasure Basun family members took in one another's saintly company Evangeli Basun Publishing Company undertook its task, a ministry informed with a zeal highlighted in the following appeal for assistance in gathering new subscribers:

> May the Lord ignite a . . . zeal in his children's hearts among our Scandinavian people at this time. Certainly there is no one who could not go out and

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[87] N.n., n.t., DEB, December 15, 1904, p. 4.

[88] Halfdan Stay, "Think on Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 8.

> gather from 25 to 100 subscribers for 3 months in quite a short time. And if there are not many Scandinavians where you live, then you can go out and in a short time earn a few cents in order to send the paper to your relatives and friends in this and the old country.[89]

The Dispersed Community

The operation at St. Paul Park obviously was the center of earthly existence for the members of the Basun family, living as they did in immediate proximity to the Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. The St. Paul Park center was also the point to which a geographically dispersed but nonetheless real spiritual community gravitated. The two newspapers, Den Evangeliske Basun and Evangelii Trumpet played indispensable roles as symbols of this dispersed community as they provided widely scattered members of Guds Menighed the means of identification with other group members and with events at the group's centers of influence. The newspapers also were the all-important communications links that dispensed news and information and thus enhanced community solidarity even for people at some distance removed from St. Paul Park.

Mention must be made of the connection between Evangeli Basun Publishing Company and another community that was important in its life, the English language Church of God movement and especially its publishing house, the Gospel Trumpet Company. The distribution of the latter's paper and the work of its preachers and colporteurs was the first evangelizing activity in the name of the Church of God among Scandinavian immigrants in the United States. It should be remembered that Thomas Nelson was an evangelist in the English language group before inaugurating his work among his fellow Scandinavians. The typical manner in which the Church of God seems to have started its missionary activity among Scandinavian immigrants is illustrated in this report by English language evangelists Enos Key and C. H. Tubbs:

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[89] "10 Cent Offer," DEB, November 15, 1904, p. 6.

> We went from there [Hawick, Minnesota] to Norway Lake. Our meetings here were first held in the place in the English language, as far as some of the old citizens could recollect. That is a Scandinavian community. The Lord used a [Gospel] Trumpet a number of years ago to open the way for this reformation in that community. I am told.(sic) Brother Nelson and others have since held meetings there. We found some walking with God. We had been told that our going there might not be profitable, as we can only speak English. But God sent us. A good many could understand more or less English. Some interpreted and labored in their own language.[90]

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[90] Enos Key and C. H. Tubbs, "News from the Field," GT, January 9, 1902, p. 5. Another example of early Church of God evangelism among Scandinavian immigrants is illustrated in the following testimony: "About nine years ago I saw 'Gospel Trumpet' (sic) for the first time; a brother brought it to our home. I began to read it and God showed me that it was the Lord's paper; he blessed me when I read the paper. I traveled to campmeeting in Grand Forks; when I saw the brethren and sisters there I felt I was one with them. I have no words to express how fortunate I was to hear the full gospel preached. I presented myself for sanctification and can never relate how happy I was when God took away my sinful nature. I know I am passed over from death to life for I love the brethren." O. Christoffersen, a letter from Pennock, Minnesota, "Testimonies," DEB, June 15, 1907, p. 5.

Cordial relations existed between the Scandinavian and English publishing houses. While in no way was the Scandinavian house a subsidiary of the Gospel Trumpet Company, the latter did provide important services beyond the capabilities of the former. For example the covers for Nelson's first book were manufactured by the English language company at no cost to the Basun family.[91] Evangeli Basun Publishing Company workers sometimes received training in the Gospel Trumpet Company office and skilled Trumpet workers of Scandinavian extraction, like Jens Welling, were sent to St. Paul Park to lend their expertise to the Scandinavian house.[92] The Church of God had "missionary homes" located in several cities and towns throughout the United States and it considered Evangeli Basun Publishing Company to be one of these homes. But the only legal bond between the two publishing companies was an arrangement whereby all property of the Scandinavian house was to become the possession of the Gospel Trumpet Company should the former ever be dissolved.[93] Other relationships also existed between the Scandinavians and the American group. Popular American evangelists and songwriters Barney

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[91] N.n., n.t., DEB, April 1, 1905, p. 4.

[92] N.n., n.t., DEB, February 15, 1907, p. 4; M[artha] S[usag], "From the Office and the Home," DEB, August 1, 1907, p. 4.

[93] E. E. Byrum, "News from the Field," GT, July 17, 1902, p. 6.

Warren and D. O. Teasley lent their services to the Scandinavians by composing songs for the 1906 songbook, Zions Seiers Sange, and Thomas Nelson served as a charter member of the board which controlled the Gospel Trumpet Company as it was re-organized in 1917. Both publishing houses thus considered the work of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company to be that of a specialized community within and in complete accord with the Church of God. In this sense, part of Guds Menighed's dispersed community was the American group.

A more immediate sense of community with and through the Scandinavian publishing company was that developed among the Scandinavian immigrants toward which the company's activities were directed. That community was dispersed principally across the northern tier of the United States, appearing as tiny enclaves of gathered saints in towns and cities with sizeable Scandinavian populations. In the east there were regular Scandinavian meetings in Boston and Hoboken.[94] Scandinavians settled in the state of Washington in large numbers and Den Evangeliske Basun reported meetings in Tacoma, Elma, Seattle, and Bellingham. The major location of Scandinavian settlement in America was the upper

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[94] Peder Pedersen and Wife, "From the Workfield," DEB, November 1, 1905, p. 4; Peder Pedersen and Wife, "From the Workfield," DEB, January 1, 1906, pp. 6-7; Peder Pedersen, "Hoboken, N. J. Tentmeeting," DEB, September 1, 1906, p. 7; Peder Pedersen, "From the Workfield," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 4.

[95] William and Hattie Strong, a letter from Tacoma, Washington, "Testimonies," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 6; "Campmeetings," DEB, July 15, 1905, p. 7.

Mississippi valley and the "Field Report" page of the paper carried letters postmarked with the names of little towns and villages scattered all through the region: Pittsville and Colfax, Wisconsin; Baltic, Minnesota; Kellys, North Dakota; Peever, South Dakota.[96]

The Basun's extended community ranged even farther than the borders of the United States. Since the Basun family intended to proclaim its message to its kinspeople in Europe, one is not surprised to discover published letters postmarked from places like Seierslev, Mors, Denmark, or Drammen, Norway.[97] Unexpected, however, is the discovery in the Basun of a brief correspondence between the paper's editor and Christian Thomsen of the Scandinavian Sailor's Home in Sydney, Australia. Thomsen had received a package of Basuns for distribution among the sailors in his home and within the Scandinavian colony in Sydney. Later he also distributed papers in New Castle.[98]

The far-flung Basun community kept in contact with each other through the newspapers. The papers addressed their readers in a conversational manner, calling for testimonies, offering instructions to colporteurs and informing readers of the kinds of problems that inhibited the growth of the subscription list.[99] Other items of community interest appeared in the papers. These ranged from the mundane--news of trouble with "itch" in Belgrade and Norway Lake, Minnesota--to warnings of heresy--an announcement that Lars Christofferson of Norway Lake had fallen away from the Lord and that all readers be warned against sympathizing with him.[100] Subscribers were also warned about practical matters, as in the case of Thomas Nelson's advice against responding to requests for money, many of which were spurious, even though couched in religious language; it was not advisable, said Nelson, "for God's children to be so trusting."[101] The newspapers also carried reports from traveling evangelists relating the events of their meetings and informing the community of their whereabouts. Announcements of future meetings and, inevitably, editorial encouragement to attend those meetings were other regular features of the papers and important sources of information for dispersed community members. Campmeetings and winter assembly-meetings provided the only opportunities for large scale fellowship with kindred spirits. The knowledge of the dates and locations of such meetings was crucial for the scattered saints.

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[96] "Campmeetings," DEB, August 15, 1905, p. 7; "Tent-meeting," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 5; S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 5; S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB January 1, 1905, p. 6; S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, January 1, 1907, p. 5.

[97] Maren Jepsen, "Testimonies," DEB, November 15, 1904, p. 5; Kaja Madsen, "Intercessory Prayer," DEB, February 15, 1906, p. 4.

[98] Chr. B. Thomsen, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 4; Chr. B. Thomsen, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1905, p. 6.

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[99] "Many of the paper's readers and our fellow laborers possibly have no understanding that insufficient information about addresses and things which they wish sent or published cause extra work and extra expense; thereby misunderstanding and error take place and they must be written back and forth. The time is not our's but God's; let us be scrupulous with it and employ it well." M[artha] S[usag], "From the Office and the Home," DEB, June 15, 1907, p. 4.

[100] S. O. Susag and Thomas Nelson, "Warning," DEB, October 1, 1906, p. 5.; S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 6.

[101] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "A Warning," DEB, February 1906, p. 4.

Den Evangeliske Basun and Evangelii Trumpet provided the dispersed community more than means of sharing information. The papers were also instruments of community identification. Many readers lived in ". . . out of the way places where the Lord's witnesses rarely come."[102] In isolated settings members of Guds Menighed were sometimes subjected to severe social pressure to forsake their new found faith. The family of Ole Iversen was denied the use of the local Lutheran church, for example, for his funeral because of the stand they had taken for Guds Menighed.[103] Den Evangeliske Basun served as a counteragent to this kind of pressure and isolation. Numerous letters appear in the paper testifying to the happiness that readers felt upon the Basun's arrival in the mail: "I am glad for the little Basun and read it with thanks and praise to God;"[104] "I am happy every time I receive the paper and get to speak with the children of God through their letters . . .;"[105] ". . . when the time nears for a new paper I long for it as for a dear friend;"[106] "how blessed it is to hear these testimonies from east to west . . . ."[107]

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[102] H. B. Haftorsen, a letter from Melvin, Minnesota, "Testimonies," DEB, February 15, 1906, pp. 5-6.

[103] Thomas Nelson, "Obituary," DEB, October 15, 1907, p. 7.

[104] Mrs. B. G. Haftorsen, a letter from Larchmont, Washington, "Testimonies," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 6.

The point of such statements valuing Den Evangeliske Basun is the paper's importance in the lives of its readers as the one tangible symbol of their ethno-religious community. Reading the paper was a common experience that linked the community across wide geographical distances. To be sure there were other important sources of group identity, and these will be explored in subsequent chapters of this study. The point here is simply that the papers themselves were symbols of this identity, a point that may be made best by one additional quotation, this one from a woman reader who lived in Spokane, Washington:

> How great it is to be a member in the family which belongs to the Lord. I read the testimonies in Den Evangeliske Basun with honor and praise to the Lord; and there is a real feast for my soul each time we receive the Basun. May the Lord now further strengthen you, you whom the Lord has given the gift to write in the paper for the edification and strengthening of the readers.[108]

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[105] G. J. Kjølass, a letter from Price, Wisconsin, "Testimonies," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 6.

[106] Rasmus Nielsen, a letter from Albert Lea, Minnesota, "Testimonies," DEB, August 1, 1904, p. 5.

[107] Thomas Olson and Wife, a letter from Jersey City Heights, New Jersey, DEB, March 1, 1906, p. 6.

[108] Mrs. K. Thompson, "Testimonies," DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 5.

CHAPTER II

IDENTITY

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IDENTITY

If ethnicity can be defined as a "social system in which the members could satisfy all of their needs for structured human relationships from the cradle to the grave,"[1] then the group of Scandinavian immigrants clustered geographically and psychically about Den Evangeliske Basun could be said to have possessed an ethnic identity. Their sense of peoplehood[2] was founded on a combination of religious and Scandinavian emphases, the product of which was an ethno-religious identity. Guds Menighed's shape and task as a group of Scandinavian immigrants were legitimized by its religious interpretation of history and its religious self-definition over against rival religious groups. Past ethnic identifiers such as national history paled in significance as they were supplanted by a theology of history which identified the group as a portion of God's reforming activity in the culmination of the present age. The St. Paul Park group also was defined by an exclusivist mentality that was something more than the simple result of a process of self-definition. This mentality provided a transcendent ethic which shaped immigrant minds.[3] Although the means of entry into this ethno-religious community was the experience of regeneration characteristic of revivalism, the result of that experience did not loosen group ties, but bound "individuals to new communities of belief and action."[4]

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[1] Milton M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 34.

[2] Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," American Historical Review, vol. 83 no. 5, (December, 1978), p. 1155.

It has been argued that migration to America altered the relationship of faith to ethnic identity.[5] Along lines advanced by this argument the St. Paul Park community demonstrates an intensification of ethno-religious commitment and a revitalized interest in the goal of history.

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[3] Ibid. ". . . systems of religious thought not only may serve to legitimize existing social arrangements but, through prophetic procalamation in a time of crisis, can help break the chains of custom by making new and revolutionary demands, dissolving myths, and declaring a transcendent ethic not identifiable with any existing society or social institution." p. 1157.

[4] Ibid., p. 1179; Dale Brown, Understanding Pietism, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 35-63.

[5] Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity," pp. 1155-1185; "Migration to America, both before and after the United States became a largely urban and industrial society, produced three important alterations in the relationship of faith to ethnic identity: (1) a redefinition, usually in religious terms of the boundaries of peoplehood, bringing folk memories to bear upon new aspirations; (2) an intensification of the psychic basis of theological reflection and ethno-religious commitment, due to the emotional consequences of uprooting and repeated resettlement; and (3) a revitalization of the conviction, whether from Jewish messianism or from Christian millenialism, that the goal of history is the creation of a common humanity, a brotherhood of faith and faithfulness. The last two developments made the relationship between religion and ethnicity dialectical. Even while

But Guds Menighed also illustrates a flexibility in the religious redefinition of peoplehood greater than is generally thought possible in immigrant religious communities. Here is a group which came to a sense of peoplehood on American soil by blending Scandinavian languages and national consciousness with an American religious system. In the process the community rejected the inherited Lutheran theology and piety in which most of its members had been reared. Where most other Scandinavian immigrants were satisfied to redefine that tradition the immigrants of Guds Menighed jettisoned it in favor of a new, more religious, understanding of peoplehood.

The St. Paul Park group considered itself part of the Church of God Reformation Movement which had come into existence about the year 1880 in northern Indiana principally through the activity of Daniel S. Warner. He and a handful of like-minded individuals had concluded that God was calling his sons and daughters together into the one body of Christ. However Christian unity was only one of two points of special emphasis. While a minister of the General Eldership of the Churches of God, a movement founded by the German Reformed revivalist John Winebrenner, Warner had been won to the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification and became part of the loosely connected group known as the holiness movement. This group had organized itself nationally in

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affirming that the unity of all mankind was the goal, intensified religious commitment defined more sharply the boundaries of subcultures and communities." ibid., p. 1161.

1867 as the "National Campmeeting Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness," and also produced numerous regional and occasionally even ethnic holiness associations. On the basis of his stand on Christian unity Warner had felt compelled to dissociate himself from the holiness movement when he saw it moving in the direction of becoming yet another substitute for the divinely organized church. However he retained the holiness doctrine of sanctification as an instantaneous second work of grace which eradicates the human tendency to sin. Like other holiness teachers Warner insisted that, infused with the gracious power of the Holy Spirit, people can indeed live above sin.[6] Fully convinced of the truth of Warner's message, the immigrants at St. Paul Park preached among their fellow Scandinavians the demand to come out of sin, sectarianism and worldliness.

The people who preached this message were not simply a collection of individuals united in a common task. *Guds Menighed* possessed an ethnic identity that was formed by religious as well as national factors. There were three ingredients in the formation of this ethnic identity: a theology of history, attacks upon other Christian groups, and a mentality of exclusion.

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[6] Several works have been published in connection with the centennial celebration of the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) in 1980. Among these are Barry L. Callen, ed., *The First Century*, 2 vols., (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1979); and Harold L. Phillips, *Miracle of Survival*, (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1979).

Guds Menighed achieved a personal and corporate identity through a particular theology of history. They understood themselves in part through their perceptions of God's activity in history. Often they expressed these perceptions by referring to the continuity between themselves as members of the Church of God Reformation Movement and the New Testament church. A particular reading of Old and New Testament apocalyptic literature provided the framework for this understanding. The St. Paul Park group's interpretation of this literature paralleled the work of writers and theologians associated with the English language *Gospel Trumpet*; in fact, the *Basun* interpretation was taken over *in toto* from the older American movement.

There was also a polemical aspect to the formation of the *Basun* family's identity as a people. Criticism of other groups frequently appeared in the pages of the *Den Evangeliske Basun*. True believers who were worshipping in denominations were constantly exhorted to come out of their unholy confusion. "Coming out" also implied "coming in" and thus there were positive and negative definitions of group identity. The Lutheran church received a particularly heavy polemical attack, largely because this was the tradition with which the Danes, Swedes and Norwegians of the *Basun* family were most familiar. As they attacked Lutheran formalism along familiar pietistic lines they stimulated a modest level of reply from Lutheran pastors. Debate served to confirm the *Basun's* uncompromising attitude, further strengthening its conception of the St. Paul Park group's identity and role.

In addition to doctrinal and polemical factors in the formation of the St. Paul Park group's identity, one also must recognize the presence of a specific attitude which might be labeled a mentality of exclusion. In one sense this mentality was the product of the group's doctrinal location in history and relative polemical definition. But in another way the group's exclusivist mentality was greater than the sum of these two parts. It was an attitude of absolute rigidity that viewed all life's dimensions as either/or situations of Kierkegaardian proportions;[7] the word toleration did not appear in the _Basun_ family's vocabulary. As twin conditions of membership the St. Paul Park group demanded total separation from sin and the world. This setting of "Christ against culture" was not merely an aspiration. Sanctified Christians could live above sin and the world's temptations. The testimony page of _Den Evangeliske Basun_ often carried accounts claiming this victory. Christians might be in the world, but they were not of the world. _Guds Menighed_ was an exclusive society and unashamed to admit the fact. Such a mentality produced a strong sense of isolation and occasionally even feelings of persecution. But the group's understanding of life as an arena of trial, temptation, and hardship transformed these into virtues.

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[7] Søren Kierkegaard, _Either/Or_, trans. by David F. Swenson and Lillian Marvin Swenson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949).

These three components, then, combined to produce a specific group consciousness and identity. In virtually all respects the same process was at work in the experience of the non-immigrant, English language Church of God movement. What is important for this study, however, is that such a process was part of the experience of an immigrant group and served to assist them in the passage from the status of "immigrant" to "American."

Scripture and History

Thomas Nelson, Sven O. Susag, Nels Renbeck, O. T. Ring and other individuals associated as either producers or consumers and supporters of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company considered themselves a people. They believed themselves to be a small segment of the true church of God. As part of the true church they understood themselves to have been called to the great work of reforming a confused and divided Christianity, restoring it to its New Testament standards of holiness and unity. This determined sense of purpose was the major contributing factor in the establishment of a group identity among the Scandinavians at St. Paul Park. Task shaped the group's character.

The group's task took its shape and authority from Biblical warrants. No document exercised a stronger influence on the self-understanding of the St. Paul Park group than did the Bible. Their attitude toward the Scriptures was the cornerstone in the construction of their identity.

> Many men have the idea that unlearned folk cannot understand the Bible. This is a doctrine left us from Catholicism's time; for to this day Catholics hold that the Bible can only be expounded by the Pope, bishops and priests, but common folk neither can nor must make any meaning of the Bible's teaching. They should let themselves be led by blind guides. Among Protestants nearly everyone has their Bibles, but the Catholic leaven is found among them also; they say that the love of God is too deep or too obscure for them, so they turn their salvation over to the minister. This thought is the one which held the majority of men in ignorance of God's plan of salvation before Luther's time, and the same complaint is that which today keeps the word's light from many a longing heart.[8]

The Bible was to be approached from the conviction that all literate people, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, male and female, could understand its pages. Since God's intentions for all of humanity could be found there all people therefore must be capable of comprehending it. Such an assumption did not imply there were no difficulties in Biblical interpretation. Some things "require deeper study." But matters essential to salvation, that which Christ had done for humanity and all that information concerning the Christian's daily life, "all this the Spirit of God inspired and through holy men has written down so clearly that the simple can understand it."[9] In fact, the opinion was ventured that the Scriptures were written largely by the unlearned for "unlearned folk" and not to the "Bishops and priests in

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[8] "Can We Understand the Bible?," DEB, November 15, 1906, p. 1.

[9] Ibid.

Rome or the learned in Corinth."[10] If common people were incapable of understanding it there was little or no purpose for the Bible to have been written in the first place.

The Bible was not only universal in readership, it was also authoritative. It was the single means by which religious truth could be proven.[11] The *locus classicus* for many, II Timothy 3:16-17, was cited by *Den Evangeliske Basun* as proof of scriptural authority.[12] Since the Bible was authoritative it was to be trusted implicitly. Biblical words, for the most part, could be taken just as read.[13] *Basun* readers trusted in Scripture so confidently because the truth it communicated was unalterable. "Nothing which we can do will change the truth; the Word of God stands eternally in heaven."[14]

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[10] Ibid. Immigrants of the St. Paul Park community were somewhat prejudiced against theological education and the idea of trained theological leadership. In this connection they could say, "It was the despised and unlearned tax-collectors and fishermen to whom God revealed his Word and will. In the dark ages it was similarly the unlearned which had the clearest view of God's Word. And when the Reformation broke out in the 16th century, it was not the Pope, cardinal, or bishop which God selected as his messengers, but a poor miner's son in Germany and a shepherd's son in Switzerland, with many more reformers of which a great part were poor folk." Ibid.

[11] "The Church in the Wilderness," *DEB*, March 15, 1904, p. 1.

[12] J. C. Blaney, "Baptism," *DEB*, September 15, 1906, p. 5.

[13] "Is the Soul Immortal?," *DEB*, July 15, 1904, p. 2.

[14] Mary Heldenbrand, "Do Nothing Evil," *DEB*, January 15, 1907, p. 4. Editor Thomas Nelson carefully examined new translations of passages he considered

Eternal, authoritative and universally understandable though the Word might be, some of its parts required interpretation. The most important of these were books considered to be prophetic, especially the apocalyptic writings, Daniel and Revelation. Although particular attention was given to apocalyptic writings, the St. Paul Park community could and did employ its rules to interpret the entire Bible.

The interpretive rules followed by the group took it for granted that the Bible was a unity. This made possible the cardinal principle of interpretation: "A text which is properly applied will not contradict any other text."[15] But one must know how properly to apply Biblical texts. Church of God writers, from whom the Scandinavians took their lead, generally believed the level of Biblical knowledge in the denominations was abysmally low; "those who read it do not understand it."[16] Such confused readers began with the wrong set of presuppositions and these led to contradictory conclusions. Since harmony was part of the

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pivotal. Thus he complained about a "new translation's" departure from the German and "old Danish" Bibles' translations of Matthew 28:19. The issue laid in the new translation's insertion of the word idet [as], which Nelson believed made the act of baptism efficacious. [Thomas Nelson], "Questions," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 5. See also, Thomas Nelson, Vaesentlige Bibel Emner [Essential Bible Doctrines], (St. Paul Park: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1915), pp. 262-70, passim.

[15] "Sixth Conversation Between Two Neighbors about the Bible, Heaven and the Christian Life," DEB, May 1, 1905, p. 2.

[16] Ibid.

divine character and thus took part in the process of inspiration, contradiction or confusion were indicators that something was amiss in the interpretation of a text. One could avoid such error by beginning at the proper point.

Honest seekers after truth should begin with the New Testament, "or the part thereof which teaches experience and duty."[17] The correct starting point for true Biblical study is with the literal first principles. Individuals ought first to understand and live according to elementary truths before plunging into the deeper mysteries of Scripture. This starting point followed a distinction made in the Basun between literal and symbolic statements in the Bible. A second interpretive principle built further on this distinction. "The scriptures which are understood literally, or which are not expressed in symbolic language, are the keys to the symbolic sayings in the prophecies."[18] Basun writers and readers clearly believed that a source of confusion in the denominations was an unwillingness to begin with the Bible's literal truths. Contradictory interpretations of the Bible's symbolic passages resulted from improper understandings of those parts of the Scriptures which treated of "experience and duty." Those who had mastered those first principles could employ them to unlock the meaning of the symbolic, i.e. apocalyptic or "prophetic," sections of the Bible.

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[17] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 351-352.

[18] Ibid. "Allegory is a method of interpreting Scripture whereby the text is made to yield a meaning which is other than its literal or surface or historical meaning. . . . Typology . . . is the comparison of an event or series of events in the present or immediate future." A Dictionary of Christian Theology, 1969 ed., s.v. "Allegory," by R. C. P. Hanson.

In practice, the application of the idea of Biblical unity and the rule that "literal interprets symbolic" led to a wide-ranging typological hermeneutic. However this hermeneutic could not be applied according to the whims of each and every interpreter. There was general agreement, for instance, that the Old Testament carried images of New Testament reality.[19] All of the Bible points to the fundamental reality of salvation in Christ. Accordingly even the historical books of the Old Testament could be radically de-historicized by interpreting their events and personalities as models or patterns of New Testament doctrine. Within this general rubric Old Testament characters and events were freely interpreted so as to produce some occasionally surprising results. The work of creation "was an image of Jesus and his work of salvation."[20] God's promise to Abraham "was an image of the spiritual blessedness and legacy which we should acquire by reason of Christ."[21]

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[19] H. M. Riggle, "Divine Healing in the New Testament," DEB, December 15, 1907, p. 8. See also, Halfdan Stay, "Jezebel," DEB, September 15, 1906, pp. 6-7 and Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Way of Salvation," DEB, December 1, 1907, p. 8.

[20] "The New Creation," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 1. See also, H. M. Riggle, "Daniel's Great Vision," DEB, June 15, 1906, p. 1. Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Resurrected With Christ," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 7; Thomas Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 301-304.

[21] S. L. Speck, "The Father's Testament," DEB, July 15, 1905, p. 3.

Israel in Egyptian bondage is an image of human bondage to sin;[22] Israel in the wilderness "is an image of our first experience after our conversion and re-birth."[23] The Israelite tabernacle in all its detail "was an ideal of the present time, or of Christ's atonement and high priestly work for us, and of the New Testament church . . ."[24] "The land of Canaan is a perfect image of sanctification."[25] Mount Zion is the place where the church of God abides, or often is the image of the true church itself.[26] Students of American black spirituals would be surprised to hear the Jordan River described "not, as some imagine, an image of death, but it was an image of cleansing, which happens in sanctification."[27] Thomas Nelson summarized the group's attitude toward the Old Testament and its typological hermeneutic when he said these things are images or types "of the soul's spiritual Canaan, which we have seen, is the promise of the Spirit."[28]

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[22] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Way of Salvation," DEB, December 1, 1907, p. 8.

[23] Thomas Nelson, Veien til Frelse, Fred og det Aandelige Liv [The Way to Salvation, Peace and the Spiritual Life], (St. Paul Park: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1905), p. 113.

[24] Jacob Woll, "The Restoration of Paradise," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 4. "The Tabernacle and Its Model," DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 1.

[25] Mrs. H. A. Hendricks, "Be Doers of the Word," DEB, June 1, 1905, p. 3. This writer, a frequent contributor to Den Evangeliske Basun, reinforces the point of her interpretation by adding, "Now if you do not believe, then you are in the same position as the children of Israel and cannot enter because of doubt."

[26] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Banquet on Zion's Mountain," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 1.

[27] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 148-149.

Application of the typological hermeneutic was not restricted to the Old Testament. Images could be discovered in the New Testament as well, images that were instructive or illustrative of later times. Jesus' hard saying to the Canaanite woman, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs" (Matt. 15:26), was interpreted allegorically so "we see that [divine] healing, which was promised to the children of God, was called bread. In natural speech we know that bread is necessary to maintain life. If Jesus called healing the children's bread, we may thereby conclude that it is something very necessary."[29]

Old and New Testament images were not figures of past realities only but present ones as well. In one sense the Basun community did not believe the New Testament era had concluded with the close of the canon. They were participating in what they perceived as the restoration of the New Testament church. Their consciousness of participation in this work had the effect of extending the terminus of the New Testament era to some time in history immediately beyond their own. So, for example, Ahab's queen, Jezebel, is taken to be a model of evil "in our day,"[30] and the Old Testament types cited above are "all images of the children of God and their experiences in our time; and each of these things contains either a warning or an experience for us in the spiritual life."[31]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Lizzie Ring, "The Children's Bread," DEB, February 15, 1907, p. 8.

Guds Menighed thought of itself as belonging to the New Testament church, now in the latter stages of its history. The idea of the church thus becomes a key element in the group's self-understanding. But the Basun family's conception of the church did not develop exclusively on the basis of a literal reading of the Bible. A literal understanding offered intelligent readers a paradigm of the church. But in order to comprehend the historical process of the church, or as they put it, "where the church has been these many centuries," it was necessary to examine prophecies and history together."[32] Such an approach to apocalyptic literature, particularly The Revelation to St. John, is often described as historicist or church-historical.[33] In this approach apocalyptic writing is read as a map of history and historical events are placed upon that map as verification of the map's accuracy.

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[30] Halfdan Stay, "Jezebel," DEB, September 15, 1906, pp. 6-7, my emphasis.

[31] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 113-14, my emphasis. In Vaesentlige Bibel Emner Nelson illustrates this extension of the New Testament era: Quoting Hebrews 4:4-11 he says, "This shows God's intentions for the seventh-day Sabbath (sic).

"This was an image of the rest of faith in the New Testament time. Joshua did not give the children of Israel the real rest which the seventh-day rest referred to, and neither did they enter into this rest by reason of their infidelity.

"This is for the people of God a greater rest ahead than the rest of the body, therefore the Lord speaks of another day, and this day was the one he referred to when he rested from his labors and sanctified the seventh day. This 'second day,' this real Sabbath's rest and celebration, is the real rest in Christ; it is the rest of faith . . . a spiritual Sabbath, a soul-rest." p. 175.

Church-historical exegesis could exercise a powerful influence in shaping the identity of any group faithfully employing its technique. This the St. Paul Park community did in rigorous fashion. It practiced an exegetical method which was regarded as the only legitimate method for understanding the apocalyptic writings of the Bible.[34] It was eminently clear to the publishers, and certainly many of the subscribers, of Den Evangeliske Basun "that the visions which John had were prophecies which apply to the New Testament age, from the days of the Apostles until the world's end."[35]

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[32] "The Church in the Wilderness," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 2.

[33] "The historicist position . . . assumes that the Book of Revelation depicts the entire course of Christian history from the time of the writer until the consummation of the ages. The various seals, trumpets, and bowls are regarded as chronologically successive stages in the development of the Christian church, particularly in the W[est]." The Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible, 1975 ed., s.v. "Revelation, Book of," by Merrill C. Tenney.

". . . taking their cue from passages like Rev. 1:1, 19; 20:5-10, the author has been thought to be dealing with a chronological scheme that is . . . [contemporary, futuristic] or generally historical, either in the sense that the seer as a philosopher of history endeavors to present the whole panorama of history from the divine standpoint, as was done by other apocalyptists, or that he predicts specific events as about to happen throughout the span of world history, or that he has in mind certain characteristic types of the divine redemptive activity which find repeated expression throughout history and likewise characteristic human attempts to resist and thwart the divine will." The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, 1962 ed., s.v. "Revelation, Book of," by J. W. Bowman.

[34] As one contributor put the matter, "It is therefore clear that the teachers wander who interpret this book

Church-historical exegesis served as the map by which the Basun family read the history which stood between the close of the canon and themselves. Apocalyptic imagery provided the signposts on this map, and it will prove instructive to examine a few examples of this interpretive style before considering the effects of the map on the identity of Guds Menighed. In Revelation 6 there are described the celebrated four horsemen of the apocalypse. Traditionally these have been understood as famine, death, pestilence and war. Closely following the teaching of the Church of God, Guds Menighed re-interpreted the four horsemen as a historical progression. The white horse thus became the image of the early church's victories, the red horse the symbol of Roman persecution. The black horse was interpreted as the great apostacy into Catholicism, and the pale horse foretold of papal persecution.[36] In a similar vein it was "easy to see"[37] that the animals rising from the abyss

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[Revelation] only in a literal manner." "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, February 15, 1904, pp. 1-2.

[35] Ibid.

[36] "Gospel Trumpet," DEB, March 1, 1906, pp. 1ff.

[37] "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 2.

described in Revelation 13 symbolized the "anti-Christian" power of Catholicism and the less evil yet still diabolical power of Protestantism.

Images were also useful in dating prophesied events. This process could be rather intricate, but it was nonetheless essential to an accurate reading of the apocalyptic map. A 1906 Basun article summarized the accepted dating scheme in the article translated from the work of a leader of the English language movement, H. M. Riggle:

> The first of these scriptures [Daniel 7:25-26] was the vision, the second was the interpretation of it. In the vision this Power made war against the saints and conquered them 'until the Ancient of Days came' and the right was perceived as the saints of the highest. In the interpretation this is restricted to 'one age and two ages and a half age.' Three and one half ages. One age signifies a year (Dan. 4:25, 32). Three and one half years is the same as forty-two months. If we calculate each month as thirty days, we get 1,260 days. 1,260 days is the same as 1,260 years (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6). The papacy's origin is clearly traced to around the year a. d. 270, and if we calculate 1,260 years from this time it brings us to 1530, when the papacy's power was speedily broken by the light of the great reformation.[38]

"Reader, it shall happen toward evening time that it shall become light. . . . We live in the evening light of the gospel day or age." These words of Thomas Nelson, repeated endlessly by members of the Basun family, offer an important clue in understanding the group's identity. It was an identity of action. Living in the time of the New Testament church's restoration meant that all true children of God were to be gathered into one body and also that sinners were to be awakened and saved. The task required "complete consecration to the Lord's service."[39] The Basun family's mission derived from their interpretation of apocalyptic writing and history. Their ability to read the apocalyptic map was also part of the historical process. To them it was quite understandable that men and women of the past had been unable to perceive their religious plight for the Word of God had been hidden from them. Persons in earlier centuries had been captive to sin, ignorance and superstition. But Den Evangeliske Basun and all those who believed its message were part of the culmination of a lengthy historical unfolding in which God was bringing light out of darkness, knowledge out of ignorance and holiness out of sin.[40] To be a part of this reforming movement was to be able to read the signs of the historical process that pointed to the movement's existence.[41]

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[38] H. M. Riggle, "Daniel's Great Vision," DEB, June 1, 1906, p. 1.

Read through church-historical spectacles, the apocalyptic map charted Christian history as a fall from primitive enlightenment to subsequent darkness and confusion.[42] The apostolic church had enjoyed full light and clarity. One "need only to read the Acts of the Apostles and the letters in our New Testament in order to see the clear evangelical light."[43] Evangelical clarity was not restricted only to the apostles. "There were many saintly witnesses to the Lord who followed in the Apostles' footsteps and who had the light of the Spirit and Word clearly in their hearts and minds."[44] This pristine era did not, however, long endure. Employing their timetable Basun writers were able to approximate the end of the gospel era at roughly a. d. 300.[45] Biblical interpreters found in Isaiah 13:12 and Daniel 12:3 descriptions of a time of total darkness when not only Christ but also the church would be blotted out. This time of apostacy, understood as the emergency of Catholicism and especially the papacy, was to have occurred suddenly and shortly after the bright light of the gospel day.[46] The St. Paul Park community believed, however, that the church had not completely disappeared from existence during this era of Catholic domination. The woman in the wilderness of Revelation 12:6 was understood as a prophecy of the church, the bride of Christ, which continued alive and nourished, but forced to flee into the wilderness of cold, papal darkness. This was the church of God in the "dark ages." "They gathered about in great darkness, insofar as doctrine was concerned, but they did not fall under the spirit of the times."[47]

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[39] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 329.

[40] Ibid., pp. 310-313; "The Apostacy," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 3; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Babylon," DEB, October 1, 1905, p. 4; Halfdan Stay, "A Comparison Between the Church of God and Babylon," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 1.

[41] "Just as it was in the days of Jesus and Paul, thus it still is now. In this last Reformation, which clears away piled up dirt and reveals the pure unspotted Zion, the unchangeable God employs his saints to help bring to nothing the mighty kingdoms of darkness, decked out under the name of the Christian churches, the different sects." R. Rothman, "Revealed to the Insignificant," DEB, October 1, 1907, p. 5.

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[42] Following is an illustration of how the apocalyptic map was interpreted: "The clean woman in Rev. 12 represents the original church of God. The great whore in the seventeenth chapter represents the apostate church . . . . The apostate church is seen as a city full of darkness and a dwelling for the devil; it rose up through the destruction of the true church. It has its origination in hell and will again be cast into the fire . . . . There is nothing which binds these two women together; they oppose each other. It is understood by all that this woman, the great harlot, represents the Catholic lineage." H. M. Riggle, "Revelation, the 17th Chapter," DEB, December 15, 1907, p. 1.

[43] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 303.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., pp. 309-310.

In the eyes of the Basun family the Protestant side of the sixteenth century Reformation inaugurated a new era in the church-historical version of Christian history. Despite the similarity between Guds Menighed's doctrine of the church and that of the Evangelical Anabaptists, the former concentrated their attention on the Lutheran reformation. No mention was made of the radical reformation, but Luther and other reformers were viewed favorably for their recovery of evangelical light. Yet their achievement was also judged incomplete. Zechariah 14:6-7 prophesied that the era of darkness would be followed by a time of indeterminate light, darkness and light blended. Den Evangeliske Basun understood this to be the age of Protestantism. Gospel truth had come to light in the Reformation, but that truth was still blended with elements of Catholicism and thus the church was not yet visible in all its New Testament purity.

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[46] Ibid., pp. 307-308. [47] Ibid., pp. 314-315.

During the Protestant era "the people blended truth with lies, religion with politics, faith with doubt, saints with sinners. . . . That such a blending is neither apostolic or Biblical they who are familiar with their Bibles know very well."[48] The greatest evil of Protestantism was that it had scattered the flock of true believers among a host of rival denominations, each contending for its own doctrine amidst a Babel of confusion. The St. Paul Park group read the prophecies of this condition in Scriptural texts like Ezekiel 34:12 and Revelation 18:1-3.[49] In the *Basun's* interpretation of history, Protestantism was a time of neither great light nor total darkness. It had been an era of gloomy half-light in which the children of God had been shamefully scattered.

Apocalyptic literature does not conclude on a gloomy note. The culmination of its vision is a day of full light at the end of the ages. *Den Evangeliske Basun* read such verses and other Scriptural accounts of the remnant's gathering as predictions of a "time when God would call his people away from this Babel-confusion"[50] into the clear light of a restored gospel day. The apocalyptic map revealed the route toward a latter-day restoration, "not a new reformation, but a reformation which will assert and keep not only the good old principles for which Protestantism's earliest leaders and successors took their lives in their hands but also the principles for which the apostles fought and suffered until death."[51] This great work of restoration, understood as the culmination of history, was the task to which the Scandinavian immigrants associated with Evangeli Basun Publishing Company zealously gave themselves. This reforming work was their historical location, confirmed in their minds by the Bible and history. In its multiple enterprises the publishing company was their principal means of self and group identification. It provided both a worldview and an opportunity for realizing that vision by which a small group of immigrants could understand themselves and their role in America.[52]

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[48] Ibid., p. 317.

[49] Ibid., pp. 318-323.

[50] Ibid., p. 322.

"Thrashing Babylon"

Scripture, especially apocalyptic writing, and church-historical exegesis were the hub of the St. Paul Park group's identity. They were what might be termed internal identifiers. Radiating from this hub were several polemical thrusts at other groups and issues. The Basun family's historico-Scriptural location of itself in the historical process led to a polemical location of itself *viz*. other churches and denominations. This external means of self-definition was both a consequence and confirmation of the internal identifiers of history and Scripture.

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[51] Ibid., pp. 326-329.

[52] The process by which this mentality was implanted and reinforced in the minds of the Scandinavian members of the St. Paul Park community was not unique to this ethnic group. In his commemorative history of the Church of God Reformation Movement, John W. V. Smith analyzes a similar process at work among the movement's founders. See John W. V. Smith, The Quest for Holiness and Unity, (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1980), especially chapter 5, "A Developing Reformation Consciousness." The obvious difference, of course, is that in the St. Paul Park group the process is shaping the mentality of a group of first-generation immigrants.

From its privileged vantage point the St. Paul Park group looked out upon a religious world overpopulated with false teachers and doctrine. These seductive interlopers kept people in deep ignorance of Bible truth.[53] Denominationalism was the chief perpetrator of doctrinal confusion and scriptural darkness. Neither *Guds Menighed* nor the English language Church of God employed a standard definition of terms like "sect" or "denomination." Certainly they did not use the terms over against "church" in some sort of Troeltschian distinction. "Sect" was used in the sense of the Latin, *sectare*, to cut off or separate. "Denomination" and "sect" were used interchangeably to indicate any and all divisions or separations within Christianity.[54] Distinctions between state churches and sectarian protest groups were unimportant to the Basun. Only New Testament Christians, or a latter-day restoration of Christianity to this New Testament purity and order, were worthy of the name "church." All humanly devised ecclesiastical organizations were guilty of usurping the authority of the true church, and the terms sect and denomination were used indiscriminately as labels for these pretenders.[55]

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[53] Halfdan Stay, "Baptism," *DEB*, April 15, 1907, p. 5.

[54] A. Leland Forrest, "A Study of the Basic Doctrines and Institutional Patterns in the Church of God," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1948), p. 9. Forrest's observation reflects common usage in both English and Scandinavian papers, as for example, "The word *sect* is from the latin word sekera (sic) . . . ." "Questions," *DEB*, May 15, 1904, p. 4. The St. Paul Park community's use of the terms "sect" and "church" was quite distant from the meanings given them by the German theologian, Ernst Troeltsch, and his American student, H. Richard Niebuhr. Although Niebuhr's American context

Editor Nelson knew that the Basun's claims would sound absurd to those unacquainted with it and its doctrine, so he appealed to new readers to compare the paper with the Bible. Scripture, not "our own ideas and understanding,"[56] should be the criterion of decision. In calling for his readers to employ an open mind Nelson tactfully broached a tender subject: "there are many wrong opinions and religions in our day, and it is possible that the religion which we have kept from our childhood, and which we therefore believe is right, can be wrong.[57]

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required him to treat "denomination" as well, his work was influenced considerably by Troeltsch's distinction between the established "churches" and protest-oriented "sects." See Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Harper Torchbooks, translated by Olive Wyon with an introduction by H. Richard Niebuhr, (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 993-1013; and H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism, Meridian Books, (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1957).

[55] D. S. Warner, "What is the Church?," DEB, December 1, 1907, p. 2.

[56] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "New Year's Greetings," January 1, 1904, p. 2.

[57] Ibid.

Amidst denominational delusion and tradition, Den Evangeliske Basun affirmed, it was possible to know the truth. Scripture was the written criterion of truth and the Holy Spirit witnessed to "unwritten truth." "The Word of God and the Spirit of God are one, thereby we can try the spirits, whether they are of God. What is in agreement with the Word of God is of God."[58] Word and Spirit confirmed each other. Other spirits, false and deluding, were at work in the world, blinding men and women to the pure truth of the Bible. Denominationalism was seen as the most potent and successful weapon deployed by Satan in the battle to keep the children of God dispersed and therefore without real power. "If you had lived alone on a remote island and only read your Bible, and then come among men and found numerous sects and different doctrines and confessions, all saying that they follow the same Bible, then you would see it [the modern perversion of the New Testament church's unity] otherwise."[59]

Denominationalism was a special target for Basun polemics. It was the domain of moribund spirituality and much worldiness. Older denominations like Lutherans and Episcopalians had lapsed into carnality "a long time ago." But always there had emerged new sects, in which always abided some of the true children of God, to infuse Christendom with new spiritual vitality. "But," lamented the Basun, "in later years the fall is nearly universal."[60]

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[58] Nels Renbeck, "The True and the False," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 1.

[59] "Which Church Will Take Us to Heaven?," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 1.

Worldliness was not the Basun's only complaint against the denominational system. Even more serious than the carnality it spawned was the confused state of the denominational churches, a condition which Basun writers and readers uniformly termed "Babel" or "Babylon." Denominational pluralism was a scandal to New Testament Christianity. "But because God in his great love loves all men and wills them good, so has he also in his Word enjoined his children to thrash Babylon. . . ."[61]

Den Evangeliske Basun took seriously the command to thrash Babylon. Its contributors viewed their contemporary denominational world as the arena of Satan's destructive influence, extending even unto the lives of God's saints. But the Basun pointed its accusing finger at another of Satan's deadly influences when it attacked what it labeled formalism. Religious ritual, which is what the paper meant by formalism, was a fog in which true believers lose their way.[62] The target of this polemic is particularly significant when one recalls that it was a group of immigrants, the majority of whom had been reared in liturgical traditions--the Lutheran state churches of Denmark, Sweden and Norway--which was leveling this charge. The Basun made a clear distinction between birth-right Christians, known as "form-Christians," and those who had passed through the evangelical experience of re-birth. "Form-Christians go forth with an empty profession; they have religion without salvation in the soul. . . ."[63] No trust was to be placed in the rites which form-Christians believed were signs of salvation. God required a humble heart, one willing to "forsake all which is of this world and also relatives and friends if so required; home and land, precious customs, etc. . . ."[64] The road to hell was crowded with the souls of "many who would be certain to go to heaven if all they needed to do was to be sprinkled with a little water as children, or be confirmed or allow their names to be entered in a church-book, etc. . . ."[65] Scandinavians associated with Den Evangeliske Basun demanded further proof of Christian life than submission to Christian rite.

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[60] "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 1.

[61] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Thrash Babylon," DEB, September 1, 1904, p. 6; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "A Holy Seed," DEB, December 15, 1904, p. 8.

[62] C. E. Orr, "Sweeter than Honey," DEB, July 15, 1907, p. 2.

Formalism demonstrated its deadening hand in numerous ways, nearly all of which were condemned or severely modified. Infant baptism was a matter of particular concern. One anonymous reader wrote to the paper to express concern over "our Danish-Norwegian brethren in the Lutheran denomination" who ignored Jesus' own words commanding new Christians to be first taught and then baptized.[66] The Basun often carried articles defining believer's baptism and immersion as the only legitimate forms for the rite. In order to accept the orthodoxy of believer's baptism people must be prepared to "lay aside all tradition, our own imaginations, and false doctrine."[67] Lutherans especially were held up to ridicule, "blinded all the more [in] that they believe that tender babies have faith."[68] The paper insisted that baptism was properly observed by immersion of believers only; it could only be administered following a testimony of conscious belief. To perform the rite in any other manner was always illogical and probably evidence of spiritual death.

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[63] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "God's Wonderful Thing," DEB, October 15, 1905, p. 3.

[64] Mrs. Eunice Ring, "Humility," DEB, August 15, 1905, p. 2.

[65] Ibid.

The St. Paul Park group's antipathy toward infant baptism was symptomatic of a general disapproval of anything which valued doctrine or practice, especially as expressed in creeds or confessions of faith, over experience. Those who "keep to the old form and confession" will ultimately lose their life.[69] Prayerbooks were believed to have deliberately distorted the meaning of certain Scripture verses and these distortions led to doctrinal differences between Guds Menighed and its liturgically oriented opponents.[70] Bible and catechism were not in doctrinal accord.[71] People leave the pastoral absolution "sinners as much as [when] they came; sin lies just as heavily upon them as before they got 'absolution.'"[72] Recitation of the Creed was insufficient in the matter of the soul's salvation.[73] In its rejection of these elements of what it decried as formalism the Basun was advancing the priority of experience over confessionalism, of piety over doctrine. Belief was understood as a conscious, personal act of total commitment to God. Such commitment resulted in the experience of salvation. This alone was the approved route to heaven; all others were spurious. This preference for experience over doctrine marks the Basun community as Wesleyan and pietistic in orientation and distinguishes the St. Paul Park community from both their own contemporaries, the fundamentalists, as well as mainstream sixteenth century reformation Protestantism.

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[66] "Questions," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 5.

[67] Caspar Holmen, "The Day of the Lord," DEB, February 15, 1906, pp. 2-3; Halfdan Stay, "Baptism," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 5; "Questions," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 4; "The Tabernacle and Its Images," DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 1.

[68] Halfdan Stay, "Whosoever Believes and Is Baptized," DEB, September 1, 1905, pp. 6-7.

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[69] Nels Renbeck, "Search Yourself," DEB, September 15, 1906, p. 4.

[70] O. T. Ring, "Gone Astray and Straying," DEB, May 1, 1907, p. 3. Ring cited a prayerbook's translation of Psalm 147:3, "He heals them who have a broken heart and gives medicine to treat their illnesses." He urged Basun readers to compare this with their own Bibles, and then concluded, "The intention to distort the scriptures was in all probability to destroy the doctrine of divine healing, or to deny that bodily infirmities can be cured by faith and prayer. This distortion of the Word of God was planned by the Devil and written in order to be employed through the consecration of priests. Thereafter it should be used by these poor ministers who do not know themselves what the Word of God in reality teaches. . ."

[71] C[hris] Holte, "Death," DEB, March 15, 1907, p. 5.

[72] Hans Andersen, "Salvation is an Experience, Not a Profession," DEB, October 1, 1906, p. 1.

[73] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 54.

Scandinavian immigrants in Guds Menighed rejected in the name of their reformation more than religious rites and confessions. Traditional feasts and observances were also set aside. Letters were published in the Basun testifying to the joy felt at no longer celebrating the Christmas holidays in the old manner. Yet the lure of observing Christmas according to traditional customs of the homeland was still strong. One woman described how she succumbed to the temptation of Christmas revelry and fell ill as a consequence. Her illness was relieved when she sought divine forgiveness.[74] In the case of Christmas traditions Guds Menighed's conception of Christianity required a complete break with past custom. Other usages were also laid aside, care sometimes being taken to provide substitute customs more in accord with Basun teaching. The group's attitude toward funerals illustrates this process.

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[74] Christine Fenstand, "Testimonies," DEB, May 1, 1904, pp. 5ff. The Basun regularly published letters from subscribers in a column titled "Testimonies." Ms. Fenstand lived in Peever, South Dakota. The same antipathy toward Christmas celebrations is reflected in a letter from Gundar Jørgensen of Price, Wisconsin, also published in this number of the magazine.

A questioner asked the Basun staff whether the minister's act of casting three handfuls of earth into the grave before burying the body was a New Testament practice. The paper responded by saying the act was "an old custom and there is of course no good reason why a minister who is in the light of the Lord's Word should practice any such."[75] But the paper's editor, Thomas Nelson, apparently felt some obligation to provide worship aids for funerals in the several songbooks he edited. These aids took the specific form of gospel songs oriented to Christian burial. Nelson wrote some of these himself, one of them, "Vi Samlet er om Baaren," appearing in the majority of the songbooks published by Evangeli Basun Publishing Company and used by the immigrants of Guds Menighed.[76] It would thus appear that leaders of the group were in some measure sensitive to the void left by their demand for the total rejection of past custom. The demand was not softened, but other forms were devised to fill the vacuum it created.

Formal ministerial education was to the Basun family another illustration of the defective quality of denominational religion. "Learned ministers" were attacked for their arrogant and presumptuous seizure of church authority. They had neither the right or power to "make men into Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, etc."[77] Seminary trained pastors were blamed for dividing "the children of God into sects and parties."[78] But even revivalists could be criticized for announcing that great numbers of people joined the church as a result of revivals; Guds Menighed valued the single soul with a genuine experience over "a thousand [who] put on a profession without having the experience of salvation."[79] The Basun believed that education influenced ministers away from experiential salvation into theological sophistication, from the leading of the Holy Spirit toward the confused teaching of humans. This conviction was reinforced by the denominational clergy's rejection of one of the important doctrines of both the English and Scandinavian speaking Church of God--divine healing. That this New Testament practice was no longer held in regard by denominational Christians was due to "the unbelief which has come down to us from the dark ages of confusion and apostacy and which is spread from the pulpits of worldly wisdom and ignorance of Godly things in that it takes away our Redeemer's love and compassion from men."[80] Education was the enemy of faith and the true knowledge of God.

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[75] "Questions," DEB, December 15, 1905, p. 4.

[76] Nelson wrote songs for use in funeral services: "Vi Samlet er om Baaren" [We Are Gathered About the Bier]; "Det Sidste Farvel" [The Last Farewell]; a child's funeral hymn, "O Gud, din Villie Ske" [O God, Your Will be Done]. See Thomas Nelson and D. O. Teasley, eds., Zions Seiers Sange [Songs of Zion's Victory], (St. Paul Park: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1906).

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[77] "The Church in the Wilderness," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 2.

[78] Ibid.; see also, J. C. Blaney, "Difficult Times," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 1: "Many present-day sectpreachers (sic) do not hesitate to say that Jesus founded a sect, and just as the doubting Jews who crucified him, they say that the Church of God is a sect. If Jesus were here they would oppose him just as their brothers, the Jews, did."

[79] R. Rothman, "Christ's Compelling Love," DEB, October 15, 1906, p. 1.

The world of denominational Christianity was condemned as an evil place. It was worldly, cold, formal and superstitious. Its doctrine had lost the light of God's word and wandered after human wisdom. For these reasons denominations and the "sect system" were to be not only avoided but shunned. Beyond the Basun's polemical judgment against denominationalism there also was the belief that Scripture and history validated the paper's conclusions. For true children of God the only possible course of action was to follow the word of Scripture and "come out of Babylon,"[81] which is to say, forever forsake fellowship with any and all denominations. The come-outer spirit virtually cannot be over-estimated in the formation of a group or individual identity with respect to the St. Paul Park group as a whole. Come-outism powerfully influenced these immigrants to break radically with their religious past. Come-outism cut this band of first generation immigrants from their European roots and more recently acquired traditions and planted them in the soil of an American religious movement. Thus transplanted they could not and would not look to their former religious heritage for spiritual nourishment. They had come out of that into what they understood to be a new reformation. This reformation, begun in America but the culmination of universal history, gave them a history and a perspective on their own lives and times from which many would not look back fondly upon the past, even the relatively immediate past of their own Scandinavian homeland.

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[80] "Divine Healing," DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 8.

[81] Revelation 18:4.

Fully convinced of their place in the new reformation of the church, the immigrants at St. Paul Park took as their special task the proclamation to their fellow Scandinavians of the message to be sanctified and come out of worldliness, sin and the denominational system. This requirement was nothing other than the command and gift of God. Guds Menighed testified to its fulfillment in their own lives; opponents and detractors were regarded as the instruments of Satan.[82]

Sanctification brought release from a desire for "the pleasures of this world."[83] One frequent letter writer, Rasmus Nielsen, described a conversation between himself and a group of ministers during which he testified to the experience of entire sanctification and claimed freedom from any sin "for the past six months." When pressed by the ministers to acknowledge the presence of original sin in his heart, Nielsen told them God had cleansed him "from all sin."[84] Testimonies are ample to suggest that the immigrants of Guds Menighed were convinced that God called people out of sin and worldliness into "perfect salvation." It was incumbent upon all who claimed the name Christian to come out into the experience of entire sanctification.[85]

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[82] Christoffersen, "Dangers, Temptations and Difficulties," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 5.

[83] Bastine Christoffersen, a letter from Pennock, Minnesota, published under "Testimonies," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 5.

God's call to come out had a second meaning for the Basun family. A "glorious liberation" awaited those who had the "ability to trust God's Word, even when it goes against . . . old prejudices and dogmas."[86] This liberation was God's gift to individuals willing to quit the confused Babel of denominationalism for the clear evening light of the church of God. This was no call to a new movement or church, but instead a plea to return to the Jerusalem of New Testament Christianity. Den Evangeliske Basun published numerous articles, occasionally serialized through several issues, to explain to its readership the present activity of God in the destruction of "sect-Babylon." Such articles were often theoretical explanations of how the work of the

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[84] Rasmus Nielsen, a letter from Albert Lea, Minnesota, published under "Testimonies," DEB, March 1, 1905, p. 6.

[85] Inga M. Rustand, a letter from Wendell, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, September 15, 1905, p. 5; K. Thompson, a letter from Spokane, Washington, in "Testimonies," DEB, January 1, 1906, p. 6; Rasmus Nielsen, a letter from Albert Lea, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, January 1, 1905, p. 5; Jacob Woll, a letter from Sisseton, North Dakota, in "Testimonies," DEB, July 15, 1904, p. 7.

[86] "Romans 7 and 8," DEB, September 1, 1904, p. 2.

Basun participated in the restoration of the New Testament church. This restoration was identified as the true faith, "the one way to obtain salvation from sin."[87] The church-historical interpretation of Biblical apocalyptic writings was often the framework for such articles.[88] In addition to theoretical or analytical commentaries the Basun often published letters of testimony mailed by its readers, itinerant evangelists and colporteurs. People corresponded with the paper in order to testify to the activity of God in their lives; frequently there were statements explaining how their writers had been led by God out of the evils of denominationalism. Testimony writers commonly describe themselves as having experienced uneasiness or unhappiness while members of denominations.[89] This discomfort is generally regarded by them as a time of spiritual death, either in the Scandinavian homeland or as newcomers in America, because sanctification was not a present reality in their lives.[90] Sometimes a letter-writer would admit to an initial period of rejection of the Church of God message for its apparent self-righteousness, over which Biblical teaching and the Basun's "much good" finally triumphed.[91] Always there were expressions of thankfulness at the release from sectarian bondage.[92] Frequently these testimonies would include an appeal to leave Babel behind, regardless of the cost.[93]

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[87] A. L. Byers, "A Religious Reformation," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 3.

[88] See for example the conviction expressed in one of the earliest numbers of the magazine's first volume: "It was in the year 1880, or about this time, that God began showing his children that the Church of God does not consist of the protestant sects but of the children of God, who all belong to this church, and that all other denominations were Babel or confusion, which had fallen from the things which are of above, to the things which are of this world; also that the people of God must come out of her, so that they should not become participants in her sins and smitten with her plagues. And as we have seen, so the protestants witness themselves that their parties have fallen from the real spiritual life to worldiness." "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 2.

[89] J. Johansen, a letter from Boston, Massachusetts, in "Testimonies," DEB, March 1, 1907, p. 6; Dora Emersen, a letter from Hawick, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, May 15, 1906, p. 5.

The scope of these polemical articles and testimonies extended beyond attacks against denominationalism in principle. A fairly inclusive list of American religious groups could be compiled from the groups attacked by name in the pages of Den Evangeliske Basun. In two instances polemical blasts are leveled against doctrine the Basun regarded as erroneous: the practice of speaking in tongues and the millenium. Tungetalere (those who speak in tongues) falsify the gifts of grace by making "the Spirit depend upon the gift instead of to make the gift depend upon the Spirit."[94] Equally short shrift was made of millenial teaching: ". . . we say that the doctrine of the establishment of a thousand year kingdom when Jesus returns is not built upon the foundation of the Bible and therefore is not of God."[95] Attacks against specific denominations were more frequent than those against doctrines. Methodists were guilty of permitting a decline in preaching's emphasis on personal conversion and Holy Spirit power.[96] This was the Basun's way of saying Methodists had abandoned the doctrine of entire sanctification. American Baptists had failed to see the truth of the evening light.[97] Christian Scientists erroneously taught that "everything is a sort of imagining."[98] Jehovah's Witnesses were deceiving people with their doctrines on hell, the second coming of Christ, and the immortality of the soul.[99] Even "Dowieism" came under fire for its aberrant views on the church.[100] The Basun gave greater attention to the threat of Adventism, this because the English language Gospel Trumpet (from which the Basun translated some articles) was deeply concerned with Adventist doctrine as an alternative to its own views on eschatology and the direction of history, and also, from the Scandinavians' point of view, because Adventist home missionaries seem to have been particularly active among Scandinavian immigrants.[101] These attacks against other groups do not appear to have been conducted systematically. Some groups, such as the Scandinavian Baptist conventions and the various Christian churches go unnoticed. While the former's piety and the latter's restorationism might lead one to conclude that they escaped Basun polemics on the basis of some positive relationship, it is much more likely that such groups simply had not yet come to the attention of the Basun's editorial staff. Even Scandinavian Baptists were organized and Christian restorationists did not hold the doctrine of entire sanctification; in the eyes of the Basun both were grave errors.

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[90] Anna Christensen, a letter from Hetland, South Dakota, in "Testimonies," DEB, May 15, 1906, p. 5.

[91] Larcene Johnson, "Testimonies," DEB, September 15, 1907, pp. 5-6.

[92] Mrs. P. O. Finstad, a letter from Belgrade, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, February 15, 1906, p. 6; Micala Simonsen, a letter from Brooklyn, New York, in "Testimonies," DEB, February 15, 1906, p. 6; Mrs. Julia Undem, a letter from Manchester, South Dakota, in "Testimonies," DEB, March 1, 1906, p. 5.

[93] J. C. J. Stovslig, a letter from Bowbells, North Dakota, in "Testimonies," DEB, February 1, 1905, p. 5.

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[94] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 233-235; "Questions," DEB, April 15, 1905, p. 4ff.; Aaron Olsen, "To Speak with Tongues," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 4; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Spiritual Gifts," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 2.

[95] Halfdan Stay, "The Kingdom of God," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 2; J. C. Blaney, "Difficult Times," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 2; Editor [Thomas Nelson], "Proofs for the Thousand Year Reign," DEB, February 1, 1904, pp. 4-5.

[96] "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 2.

[97] Carl J. Olsen, a letter from St. Paul Park, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 6.

[98] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 352.

[99] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 336-379, passim; "Is the Soul Immortal?," DEB, July 15, 1904, p. 1.

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[100] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "Dowie and His Doctrine," DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 4. John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907) was a Scots immigrant and founder of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. After ministries in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, Dowie came to San Francisco in 1888. From there he moved to Chicago in 1890 and organized his new church in 1896. His career there was marked by his belief in divine healing, a series of ever more grandiose claims of his personal authority, and the construction of Zion City, a town of some 5,000 loyal disciples near Chicago. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. "Dowie, John Alexander," by Ernest Sutherland Bates.

[101] Rasmus Nielsen, a letter from Albert Lea, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 5; "The Sabbath Question," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 2; "The Sabbath Question," DEB, April 15, 1904, pp. 2-3. Histories of other Scandinavian immigrant denominations mention Adventist proselyting activity: Sorenus J. M. P. Fogdall, "The Dano-Norwegian Baptists in America," (M. A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1915), pp. 51-2; Seventy-Five Years of Danish Baptist Missionary Work in America (Philadelphia: Danish Baptist General Conference of America, 1931), pp. 31-51 passim.

What was the motivation for the range of polemical literature and what was its effect upon the St. Paul Park group? Den Evangeliske Basun obviously believed that Guds Menighed had a perspective on the truth of God that demanded publication and, where necessary, confrontation. Their confidence in the force of the divine hand at work in history, which they believed had brought them out of the denominational Babel, impelled them in the work of spreading the truth of which they were a segment. In other words their historically-confirmed identity informed and directed their present task. This task had the effect of giving them a contemporary identity as well. Polemic was the act of carving out their own piece of turf in the American religious field, regardless of the degree of their protest that they were not creating a new religious group. This conclusion is borne out by the realization that, apart from its natural denominational enemies (Lutherans and Catholics), Den Evangeliske Basun was most concerned with smaller, less in the mainstream religious groups. These, after all, were Guds Menighed's chief rivals for the attention of the Scandinavian immigrant group. If those associated with the St. Paul Park group were to be a distinguishable landmark on the American religious horizon of 1910, then their differences with other fairly new rivals had to be articulated. Polemic was the device for this articulation. The result for the group was a contemporary identity that expressed and confirmed its historico-Biblical self-understanding.

Lutheran piety and doctrine was the dominant tradition of the Scandinavian peoples to whom *Den Evangeliske Basun's* message was addressed. As a result the Lutheran church was a special target for the paper's polemics. Lutheran pastors and "house-meetings" were the most frequent sources or places of confrontation. On the basis of its polemic one might justifiably conclude that *Den Evangeliske Basun* perceived Lutheranism as an enemy. Thus while most holiness groups criticized the Methodist church and defined themselves over against that group, *Guds Menighed* labored chiefly, but not exclusively against Lutherans. The group's identity was a product of religion and Scandinavianness. To be Scandinavian was to be Lutheran almost as much as to be Irish was to be Catholic. Hence it was almost inevitable that a holiness movement evangelizing Scandinavians would find itself attacking Lutherans more than Methodists.

Anti-Lutheran commentary was directed toward a variety of theological concerns. Considerable attention was devoted to the issue of infant baptism. A *Basun* worker named Emil Kreutz attacked the "Lutheran confession of faith" for teaching that "a man is made into a child of God in what one calls infant baptism." Kreutz went on to call this doctrine a "great delusion," "one of Satan's many lies . . . to deceive men and lead them into eternal perdition."[102] The practice of infant baptism was shameful and contrary to the Scriptures, where "not one word" is to be found in support of the practice.[103] Kreutz contended that infant baptism was merely a vestige of the dark age of Catholicism, an age in which true Christians no longer live and the teachings of which ought to be rejected.[104] A similar article attacked Lutherans and others for being blind to the teaching of anything beyond water baptism in New Testament verses such as Hebrews 10:22 and Ephesians 5:26. Lutherans were wrong to interpret these scriptures as grounds for employing baptism as the means for admission to the church. Instead, "this washing of water is . . . not water baptism, but it is the soul's cleansing in the bond of truth."[105]

The Lutheran mode of baptism was a major concern of the Basun, but it was not a solitary issue. The paper knew that its readers were familiar with the phrase, "the old Adam" as a description of the continuing presence of sin in the life of the believer.[106] This doctrine was criticized as more Lutheran error. L. Christofferson told readers in a 1904 article, "I was taught that I would have this indwelling wicked root as long as I lived, and one said it was delusion to imagine one could live in a pure sin-free life on earth and one could read great books about it."[107] But despite "all prejudice, human doctrine and more," Christofferson testified to the experience of sanctification as a second work of grace. Contrary to Lutheran doctrine, he was free from all sin.[108]

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[102] Emil Kreutz, "An Old Delusion," DEB, February 15, 1907, p. 4.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] "The Tabernacle and Its Images," DEB, February 4, 1901, p. 1.

[106] "The Old Man," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 1.

Under the Basun's close scrutiny Lutheran error also extended to adding and subtracting from the Word of God. Baptismal practice illustrated such additions as well as the Lutheran doctrine that the elements of communion are the "true body and blood of Jesus." The commandments of Christ, by which the writers meant ordinances, were to be kept in Biblical fashion. It is interesting to note further that the writer of this article appeals to Basun readers to "read the old unfalsified Bible, but do not believe what the new Christiania translation says in Matthew 28:19."[109] The inference left to those readers is that Lutherans read a false Bible.

Guds Menighed's rejection of Lutheranism extended beyond theological issues into areas of Christian practice.

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[107] L. Christofferson, "Conversion," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 5.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Hans Christenson, "To Keep Jesus' Commandments," DEB, January 15, 1905, p. 8.

Mrs. S. O. Susag, a frequent contributor to the paper, spoke for many others when she ridiculed a friend's Lutheran pastor who insisted that a good Christian paid the minister's salary, listened to the minister's sermon and attended communion, but was indifferent toward visiting saloons and attending dances. Mrs. Susag complained that such forms of amusement were "strayings" and that they testified to the real spiritual condition of Lutherans: ". . . without God and hope in the world."[110] The Basun contended that Lutheranism was guilty of a terrific reversal of Christian values.

> Who does not know that the Lutheran church in Denmark, as well as in other countries, has been nearly completely free of real believing men for several years? And when some begin to follow after God by the heart and life and revival begins to come among them in certain places, these revived ones and to a degree converted men will be taken for heretics and their worship for tomfoolery; and they will be persecuted by the Lutheran ministers and those who call themselves Lutherans.[111]

The foundation of the Basun's anti-Lutheranism was this distortion, for in the paper's eyes the emphases of Lutheranism were quite the opposite of true Christianity. In its opinion the Lutheran understanding of Christianity produced only tragedy. Martha Susag used the death of a child to illustrate the extent of Lutheranism's tragic consequences.[112] The fundamental defect of Lutheranism was that it left men and women "without an association with God."[113]

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[110] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Straying," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 6.

[111] "A Reformation," DEB, December 15, 1905, p. 1.

Letters sent to the Basun evidence a delight in confronting Lutheran pastors with the folly of their ways. These testimonies must have exerted a considerable pressure upon Lutheran readers to "come out" as article writers had already done. Such a testimony appeared in an article by H. Anderson, who described a chance meeting between himself and a Lutheran pastor at a housemeeting into which Anderson apparently had stumbled unwittingly. The pastor had assembled this little flock for the reading of the article of faith, exhortation, absolution and the Lord's Supper. Condescension is apparent in the tone of Anderson's words as he questioned for his readers whether absolution was necessary for those who already had been saved. Such as believe they can receive absolution at the hands of another human being were to be pitied. "No wonder that they say they cannot live above sin."[114] It is not uncommon to read in the pages of Den Evangeliske Basun the testimony of a soul's pilgrimage from Lutheran darkness to the evening light of the Church of God Reformation Movement.[115]

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[112] "A young girl was very sick and was given up by the doctors, and a German Lutheran pastor came to her and persuaded her to let him baptize and confirm her. Then he administered the Lord's Supper to her, and then she said to her father that now she saw the doors were open for her and a little later she died. This poor girl left without God's Word, depending upon men. If she had looked after the Word of God for what would be the means by which her soul could be saved, she would have found that 'without becoming born anew he cannot enter the Kingdom of God,' and that it is 'sorrowing after God which works conversion to salvation, which is not regretted,' and there is no other way to salvation except by faith in Jesus, who came to save his people from their sins." "Do Not Rely on Men," DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 6.

[113] Hans C. Hansen, a letter from Hawick, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 6.

It must be noted that the Basun did not regard Lutheranism in a totally negative light. It had made a positive contribution to Christian history, but that contribution was vested largely in the person of the Reformer himself. Lutheran history and hymnody apparently were known to some of the Basun writers, but approving comments on Lutheran usages are scarce. Only once in all the extant literature of Guds Menighed do they quote from a Lutheran hymn.[116] Luther was not lionized, but described as a good man who "lived up to the light he had," i.e., his knowledge of true New Testament Christianity was still blurred and distorted by the centuries-old Catholic tradition he only half-succeeded in escaping. Any good emerging from Lutheran teaching was esteemed because it agreed with Scripture, not because it was the doctrine of Luther.[117]

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[114] H. Anderson, "Has Christ Suffered Death in Vain?," DEB, December 1, 1904, pp. 4-5.

[115] Oluf Erickson, a letter from St. Paul Park, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, February 15, 1906, pp. 6ff.; Emil Kreutz, "An Old Delusion," DEB, February 15, 1907, p. 4; Christine Lunde, a letter in "Testimonies," DEB August 1, 1905, pp. 5-6.

[116] "Fruits of the Spirit--Joy," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 1.

What was the impact of this polemic upon the Scandinavian Lutheran community? Such a question is difficult to answer apart from the infrequent written responses of Lutheran pastors to Basun criticism. A Pastor Langseth questioned the teaching of the St. Paul Park group in the margins of a copy of Den Evangeliske Basun he had discovered and then returned to its publishers. The Basun published his questions and its answers along with the following editorial comment: "There are many upright souls who are held away from the truth in the Bible by such prejudiced sentences which are found in the questions above."[118] Thomas Nelson skillfully employed these Lutheran rebuttals as foils to exploit his own case against Lutherans. Nelson cited such a letter in a 1905 article entitled "The Ministers' Rage." The technique he employed was to quote sections of the letter and then comment upon the minister's assertions with a sentence such as, "This shows that the ministers and teachers of our day have read their church rituals and usages more than the Word of God."[119] A Lutheran pastor in Glendorado, Minnesota had written out of deep pastoral concern this letter which also served as grist for Nelson's mill; for he had lost one of his flock to the St. Paul Park group, which he regarded as "one of the most dangerous sects in this land of sects."[120] Such concern was only proof to Nelson that the "ministers rage against us,"[121] a point in which he evidently wished his readers to concur. There could be no cooperation with Lutherans.

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[117] "I know that there are many who will say that this is the old theology, that it is Lutheran doctrine, etc. But if I prove what I say with the Word of God, then you must acknowledge that you have been mistaken, so that you shall not come into opposition against God." "The Sinful Nature," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 1.

[118] Pastor Langseth wanted answers to the following: A Teacher who has to go out of one sect and found a new sect, is not he, according to the Word of God, doing a worse evil? Now when they and their false Christians seek to tear your unstable and defenseless souls, what then? Why did Paul himself have a Greek physician with him? But is it [the use of medicines] any place forbidden? "Questions," DEB, January 15, 1905, p. 2.

Other than Lutherans, the Catholic Church received the heaviest criticism of Den Evangeliske Basun. This polemic was not born out of intimate experience or association, as in the case of the paper's anti-Lutheranism. The tenor and issues of the Basun's anti-Catholic polemic were drawn from the English language Church of God and its literature. In this manner the Scandinavians at St. Paul Park adopted one of the oldest themes in American Protestantism--anti-Catholicism. The spectacle of an immigrant group employing nativist tactics is not without its irony. But the anti-Catholicism of Den Evangeliske Basun was grounded in theological and ecclesiological rather than political concerns. As an indicator of the group's assimilation into American society, its anti-Catholicism might be best seen as an intermediate point on that road: assimilationist to the degree that the Basun felt free to attack Catholics like any other American Protestant group, ethnic to the degree that group concerns predominated in this attack.

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[119] "The Ministers Rage," DEB, February 1, 1905, p. 2.

[120] Ibid., p. 3.

[121] Ibid., p. 2.

On the basis of Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18, 24, Den Evangeliske Basun defined the church as consisting of "true believers or the body of Christ."[122] The judgment of The Gospel Trumpet and, following its lead, Den Evangeliske Basun was that "the Roman Catholic church has never been the Church of God" because ". . . most of those who belong to the Roman church have no communion with Christ."[123] The founders of Catholic Christianity were "apostate, ambitious, arrogant and quarrelsome bishops and priests."[124] The spirit of Catholicism was the spirit of Antichrist foretold in prophecy.[125] When it came to power thick darkness was spread over the church, blinding it and condemning it to wander until the partial breakthrough of the Reformation.[126] Den Evangeliske Basun's form of anti-Catholicism never advocated voting against Catholic candidates for public office. It was unconcerned with Catholic encroachment into American political institutions. Instead the paper attacked the Catholic Church for the hermeneutical reasons noted above. Politics, a principle nativist concern with Catholicism, was ignored. Like the broader Church of God Reformation Movement, the Scandinavian group was concerned more with its own identity and distinction among other religious groups than with defending America against foreign enemies.

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[122] "A Reformation," DEB, November 15, 1905, p. 1.

[123] "The Church in the Wilderness," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 2.

[124] "A Reformation," p. 1. (Another reference to the article cited in n. 115).

[125] "The Church in the Wilderness." (Another reference to the article cited in n. 116).

[126] Ibid. ". . . History makes it clear that the so-called Catholic Church has murdered hundreds of thousands

Exclusivist Mentality

The inner logic of church-historical exegesis and the outward thrusts in the direction of other American religious groups produced in Guds Menighed a mentality of exclusion. These inward and outward identifiers formed the foundation of a common set of assumptions about the group and its members. This mentality isolated the group from social contacts which among other immigrant groups often served as arenas in which patterns of assimilation were either begun or further developed. This exclusivist mentality must be examined for its content and force in the lives of the Basun family.

The ideal of toleration was present in Guds Menighed in only one way. The group sharply rebuked the denominational pattern of toleration for "all other

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of men. This church was only paganism under a Christian name." Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 311.

communions with their different and opposing doctrines and ideas."[127] The Basun wryly observed that the one thing all such groups could not tolerate was sound, biblical doctrine. The paper was quite willing to be judged by the Word of God and it is in this very narrow sense of the term that the community judged itself tolerant;[128] only biblical truth was acceptable. Writers often sounded warnings to beware of false prophets and teachers of un-apostolic doctrine.

The newspaper was sensitive to the irony of an apparently intolerant proclamation of Christian unity. Its response was to point up the fact that a divided Christendom was the result of human activity and not the work of the Holy Spirit. Surely those who had participated in rending the seamless robe of Christ were in no position to accuse anyone else of destroying the unity of the church![129] Although such groups talk about unity (and the Basun seems to have been generally aware of increasing ecumenical activity after the turn of the century), "as long as men believe they have the right to establish sects and parties or as they call them, churches and societies, that unity which God wishes more than any other thing among his people on the earth cannot be reached."[130] In the minds of the members of Guds Menighed, Christian unity could only occur on the familiar terrain of its exclusive message. L. Christofferson adequately summarizes the group's attitude toward the growing spirit of cooperation among American denominations.

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[127] "They Do Not Tolerate Sound Doctrine," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 4.

[128] Editor Nelson issued New Year's greetings by saying, "A part of the things we assert may be new for many; but if it is the Word of God then it is not any new doctrine, but the old apostolic doctrine. We must not believe that a doctrine is correct because it is a hundred or a thousand years old, for our faith and doctrine must be the same as the Apostles proclaimed almost two thousand years ago," DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 2.

[129] "Unity of the Spirit," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 1.

> . . . the Lord says to his own, 'Therefore go out from Babel, you who are my people, that you will not participate in her plagues.' Praise God! We have liberty to go out from Babel-union; and if we do, then we will come to Zion, the church of God, and there are none of man-established unions except they are the gathering of the first-born.[131]

Where contact with other groups was permitted it was on an individual rather than corporate level, and from a rather condescending point of view at that; saints of Guds Menighed could lend a spiritual hand to a denominational Christian "as your neighbor who needs your help."[132]

Readers of Den Evangeliske Basun were told in no uncertain terms that there existed only two moral classes of human beings: saints and sinners. All men and women walked either in the narrow way leading to life or else in the broad road to destruction. For the St. Paul Park community existence was an either/or matter. About this vital concern there could be no ambiguity or indecision. "The evil cannot bear good fruit or live in holy commerce and the good will not bear evil fruit or live according to the flesh and sin."[133] For true believers separation from sin and the world was crucial.

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[130] Ibid.

[131] L. Christofferson, "Union," DEB, July 15, 1905, p. 4.

[132] Martha Susag, "Questions," DEB, November 15, 1907, p. 4. The condescension expressed by the group is often striking: "My soul praises Christ for the privilege to know the truth which makes us free. It is sorry to see the flock of professors who are cold and formal, without life and power in God and upholding the doctrine that we cannot be free from sin." J. M. Harrington, "Life in Christ," DEB, April 1, 1907, pp. 6-7.

The saints believed it necessary to remove themselves from sin and the world. Their conception of "world" was extended to include all activities of the denominational churches. Real Christians would have no traffic with such worldliness. Where such association might be permitted, the unhappy result inevitably would be the loss of the saints' spiritual vitality.[134] To avoid this calamity all contact with denominational churches was discouraged. Even though Guds Menighed did not always operate Sunday schools, parents were strongly warned not to allow their children to attend "sect Sunday schools" where they might "drink in the sect's doctrines."[135] Revivals of that era were questioned and attendance was discouraged because they often were "of a compromising spirit which is active in our day, a spirit which takes in the religious world with all its worldliness and all its false doctrines."[136] The "scripture-learned," honorary degree holders, and even holiness leaders were compared with Nehemiah's adversaries Sanballat and Tobias.[137] This principle of separation from denominational Christianity extended even to the point of requiring a second submission to the rite of baptism if the first act had been performed during infancy or prior to an intentional act of belief and commitment to Christ.[138]

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[133] Emma Stearns, "Two Ways," DEB, July 15, 1907, p. 8; Christine Lunde, "The Two Ways," DEB, August 1, 1907, p. 1; Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 105-106.

[134] N[els] Renbeck, "The True and the False," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 1.

[135] M[artha] S[usag], "Questions," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 5.

It is difficult to portray the extent to which separation was advised without simply generalizing that Guds Menighed forbade all contact with the world. As the paper advised,

> Keep away from all evil places. Do not go to the city on days when there are parades or other street shows; make your purchase the day before or the day after. Close your eyes and ears, as much as you can, to the evil in the world, but hold them wide open for the things which are of God. (A man who has a taste for literature will not read a poorly written book, for that will weaken his taste). Never take part in any conversation which is unclean. Do not laugh at other's silly stories. Do not think too much about the evil that is done; do not reckon too much on sinners and the crimes in the nation except as a sign and picture of their horror. It is shameful even to mention things which are done. If we are not careful such things will blunt the delicacy of our moral nature. It is better not to

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[136] "Questions," DEB, April 1, 1906, p. 6.

[137] J. D. Hatch, "Washed by the Word," DEB, November 15, 1904, p. 2.

[138] Chris Holte, "Faith and Baptism," DEB, May 15, 1906, p. 6; Halfdan Stay, "Baptism," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 5.

> read newspaper accounts of murder, suicide, bank-robbery, divorces, etc. In the beginning they will fill the soul with crimes and abominations; you will take more interest in such reading than in the Bible.[139]

The community recognized the necessity of commercial and economic contacts with persons it judged to be non-believers, but it also employed the phrase "dead to everything around us" as an expression of the ideal of Christian indifference to knowledge of the things of the world which would come through those contacts. Further, the saints were exhorted to attain this indifference not only toward activities about which there might be some moral question, but also toward their own families and personal relationships with other saints.[140] About most of these issues the Bible was "clear enough. It forbids avarice, love to the world, all unfriendly words and deeds, all pride and vanity, all empty loose speech, all sumptuous foods, all costly and adorned clothing."[141] Any person not conforming to this standard of behavior was judged an idolator;[142] non-conformity was evidence to the group that the individual loved the things of the world more than the things of God.

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[139] C. E. Orr, "Abhor the Evil," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 7. This message was originally intended for consumption by English language readers in The Gospel Trumpet; the Basun translated it for the edification of Scandinavians.

[140] "Life Through Death," DEB, November 1, 1907, p. 6.

[141] "Perfect Surrender to God," DEB, November 1, 1907, p. 6.

[142] Thomas Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed [Faith, Hope and Love], (St. Paul Park, MN: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1914), p. 80.

Portraying Guds Menighed as an exclusivist community determined to sever all connections with other Christians and the world is only a partially exposed picture of the dynamics of their mentality. A fully developed picture must also include the positive stimuli to separation. These would be included within the group's understanding of itself as composed of citizens of the Kingdom of God. The Basun family conceived of this kingdom as a present reality, fully confirmed by the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.[143]

Life, even for citizens of the kingdom, was a time of trial, testing and growth. It was usefully employed as preparation to meet God. True Christians would often be tempted to compromise, closely followed by the temptation to worldliness. Kingdom citizens resolved not to look back to their former ways, but instead to remember "that the temporal things are only smoke and vapor compared with the spiritual and eternal things; therefore, if we lack salvation or spiritual help or guidance, we ought not allow anything on earth to hinder us in gaining it."[144]

Although the Basun preached the joy of Christian devotion, it tempered that message with a gospel of endurance. The children of Israel faced hardship and trial in their journey through the wilderness, and God's children in the evening light should expect similar trials. But the difficulties of earthly existence pale into insignificance when one recalls the sufferings of Christ.[145] Life's hardships are not, however, without their blessings. Tried in the testing fires of life, we may "come out as gold."[146] Indeed, this is the means of progress in the Christian life. Ultimately, of course, eternal, heavenly bliss would recompense the Christian for all the suffering endured on earth.[147]

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[143] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 346-347.

[144] "Campmeeting and the Home for Old People," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 4; Hannah Negaard, "Do Not Look Back," DEB, March 15, 1906, p. 1; Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 348; Mrs. H. A. Hendricks, "What is Life?," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 1.

A mentality of exclusion or isolation, confronted by opposition and counter-attack, might easily degenerate into a persecution complex. There is some evidence that the St.

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[145] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 103-4, and p. 229. M[artha] S[usag], "Trust," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 5. Guds Menighed's attitude in this regard is poignantly illustrated in the testimony of H. C. Hansen, which appeared in the paper shortly after Hansen's son, Johann Ditmar, died of diptheria at the age of two: "God gave me a precious lesson at this time, which was to trust more upon the Lord who has been my physician since I was saved. He was faithful because he saw my need and came to help me. One night I struggled with God nearly the whole time, but when the morning broke the victory was won. I find no words to describe my joy. It feels as if one comes from a storm-tossed sea into a quiet harbor. I burst into tears of joy for in this harbor lay my brethren at rest, they who have struggled in the same way. I can say my heart is filled with love and the Holy Spirit gave witness to full victory. Glory be to his name who sits upon the throne." H. C. Hansen, "Testimonies," DEB, April 1, 1907, pp. 5-6.

[146] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 175.

[147] Ibid., p. 229 and p. 236; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Home-longings," DEB, November 15, 1907, p. 1.

Paul Park group developed attitudes in this direction, but not to the point of dictating the direction or thrust of Guds Menighed's activities. Rather than allowing a negative, persecutionist attitude to develop, the group channelled its energy into active, solidified support of the programs and activities of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company.[148]

The exclusivist mentality, polemical self-definition and theology of history combined to forge a sense of identity and communal solidarity in the Scandinavian immigrants of Guds Menighed. Their church-historical reading of apocalyptic and history effectively redefined past events, customs and traditions. The group's task, and therefore its identity, were shaped in considerable measure by the Basun family's self-understanding as a portion of the restored New Testament church. Both as individuals and community Guds Menighed pointed to the New Testament and to their peculiar reading of history as the story of the group itself. In great part this legitimatized their existence.

Guds Menighed's sense of peoplehood was further enhanced by the attacks its paper launched on other American religious groups. By faulting competitors Den Evangeliske Basun may not have gained much credibility for its non-sectarian claims. But it did succeed in distinguishing iself against the pluralistic backdrop of American religion. The final ingredient in the achievement of Guds Menighed's ethno-religious identity was the transcendent ethic enforced through the group's mentality of exclusion. The activities of the group and its associates were judged against an absolute standard. Since the group believed that standard to be divinely authorized, the work of editors, type-setters, testimony writers and colporteurs possessed eternal significance. The mentality of exclusion lent a sense of overwhelming importance to the work of the Basun.

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[148] "The Family's Altar," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 3; Thomas Olson, "See the Birds of Heaven," DEB, August 1, 1907, p. 1; Caspar Holmen, "His Will," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 7; R. Rothman, "Let Us Count Our Days," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 3.

Possessed of a new history, a self-definition, and a transcendent ethic, the immigrant Guds Menighed re-worked Christian history and Scandinavian nationality into a new ethnic identity based on religion as well as affiliation with a political group. On the basis of these three validators Guds Menighed achieved a sense of peoplehood.

CHAPTER III

DOCTRINE

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The doctrine of Guds Menighed exercised a powerful influence on the formation of the group's identity. Indeed, this influence was so strong as to enlarge the base of ethnic identity to include religious ingredients as well as nationality. It was this combination of factors which made for a sense of peoplehood among the Scandinavians of Guds Menighed.

Jaroslav Pelikan describes doctrine as that which "the church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches and confesses on the word of God."[1] He goes on to explain doctrine as the expression of the church's inner life of faith, hope and love. It follows from Pelikan's description that an examination of a particular religious group's teachings illumines the inner life of that group. Thus in order better to understand the inner life of the Basun family a closer examination of the doctrinal expressions of its experience is necessary. In addition to the hermeneutical and polemical questions treated in the previous chapter an analysis of

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[1] Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 1.

Guds Menighed's doctrine must be devoted to the three issues to which the group gave the bulk of its attention and energy: salvation, the church and divine healing.

The Doctrine of Salvation

In the teaching of Guds Menighed the work of salvation begins with a recognition of the human predicament. "It is needful for us to come to understand what we are, and sufficiently learn what God can and will make us into."[2] The point humans must understand is that the world is composed of only two classes of people, the children of God and the children of Satan. They are distinguishable by the absence of sin in the lives of the former and its presence in those of the later.[3] Through Adam and Eve "the whole human race was smitten with sin,"[4] and made children of Satan. Though sinners, humans still possess free will, the power to choose good or evil, for this was something God refused to take from them as a consequence of the fall.[5]

Humans are both free and sinful, but what does it mean to be a sinner? The Basun identified two forms of sin:

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[2] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "What is a Man?," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 6.

[3] "Salvation Keeps Us from Sinning," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 1.

[4] DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 4.

[5] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Man's Free Will and the Lord's Will," DEB, April 1, 1905, pp. 2ff.

"sin in deed and sin in nature."[6] Outward sinful deeds stem from the root of sin, the evil human nature. These outward sins were described as transgressions of God's law. Some people "sin willingly and intentionally, in that they give the flesh free reign and do not fight against sin and Satan, but are willing slaves in sin's chains."[7] Outward sins must be both intentional and knowledgeable and this qualification of the definition of sin was the basis of the *Basun's* distinction between sins and failures: "Every sin is a failure, but not every failure is a sin."[8] But *Guds Menighed* was far more interested in the sins of humanity. Apart from the grace of God sin was the inevitable curse of human existence.

Sin was the human predicament, but it extended deeper into life than the surface level of overt actions. The *Basun* believed these actions were merely the external indicators of an inherent sinfulness. The paper clearly taught a doctrine of original sin. Inward "lusts and tendencies" are the natural legacies of all humans as descendents of Adam.[9] This inheritance did not condemn those who by reason of age or incapacity could not make proper moral choices. All others were responsible, however, and therefore under the threat of judgment. Yet people could at least temporarily possess a sinful nature and still be clean, be "holy, yet not completely holy."[10] This assertion is illumined by a consideration of Guds Menighed's understanding of human nature as "old man" versus "new man."

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[6] "Sanctification," *DEB*, December 1, 1906, p. 1; *DEB*, November 1, 1906, p. 4; J. C. Forrest, "What is Sin?," *DEB*, June 15, 1907, p. 8; T. A. Berry, "Sin," *DEB*, November 1, 1907, p. 2.

[7] *DEB*, October 15, 1904, p. 4; J. W. Byers, "Faultfinders," *DEB*, September 15, 1904, p. 3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] "Questions," *DEB*, June 15, 1904, p. 4.

Den Evangeliske Basun used the seventh and eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans as the authority for its interpretation of human nature. The fact that serialized expositions of these chapters appeared in both 1904 and 1906 volumes of the paper would seem to illustrate their importance in the community's theology. Guds Menighed read chapter seven as St. Paul's description of human nature prior to the action of God's grace. Chapter eight was interpreted as his treatment of the transformed human's new life in Christ; chapter seven described the old man, chapter eight the new. In complete accord with Wesleyan teaching on this subject, the Basun flatly rejected the possibility of a righteousness imputed to humans without a real change in their character.[11] In the midst of their expositions on this topic Basun writers appealed to their readers to "cast away the unbelief which is inculcated in us through the old sin doctrine . . . ."[12] Far too many Christians "say their experience is described in chapter seven;" far too few see themselves in chapter eight,[13] hence the need of the paper's expositions.

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[10] Ibid.

[11] "The Old Man," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 2; "The Tabernacle and its Images," DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 2; "The Fruits of the Spirit--Goodness," DEB, December 15, 1904, p. 1.

Romans 7 is St. Paul's description of the old man. In this view humans are understood to have within them a double nature, part of which desires the good but the other evil. Sin's power is too strong and in spite of the human will to good, sin is the result. "About this man [St. Paul] says, 'I am carnal, sold under sin.'"[14] The Basun then proceeded to read chapter eight as his testimony to a gracious liberation from "this body of sin and death." "Christians are not carnal" was the theme of chapter eight. It is the assertion of a "liberation and salvation from this condition, a liberation from this body of death or this flesh in which there does not dwell any good."[15] Where the old man existed the new man could not. Where the new man had been born the old surely must soon die. The old man was sinner, the new man on the road to sanctity. Guds Menighed denied the possibility of any sort of permanent co-existence between the two. In order to be a follower of Christ the old man's death was required. This death could not be achieved through a symbolic or mystical identification with Christ's crucifixion, but only in the literal execution of all the desires of the former self, the old man.

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[12] "Romans 7 and 8," DEB, September 15, 1904, p. 3; the same material was re-published under the same title in DEB, August 15, 1906, pp. 1-2.

[13] "Romans 7 and 8," DEB, September 1, 1904, p. 1.

[14] "Questions," DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 4; "Romans 7 and 8," (another reference to material cited in n. 13); "About Growth in Grace and Knowledge," DEB, August 1, 1906, p. 1.

[15] "Romans 7 and 8," (another reference to the material cited in n. 13).

"We must follow him to Golgotha, yes, we must be crucified; otherwise we have not followed him the whole way."[16] While the crucifixion of Jesus resulted in his natural death, repentant sinners were called upon to die a spiritual death, to crucify the old man, the inward sinful nature. Without this death of the old man "no person can gain heaven; nothing less than this is salvation in Jesus."[17] In the idea of the crucifixion of the old man the Basun expressed its fundamental conviction that taking the name "Christian" demanded a fundamental break with one's past life. This break began in justification and ended in sanctification. "Crucifixion of the old man" was an oft-repeated metaphor employed to explain the mystery of salvation:

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[16] Keo A. Nelson, "Jesus' Followers," DEB, January 1, 1905, p. 2.

[17] "The Old Man," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 1; A. L. Byers, "The Second Cleansing," DEB, October 1, 1907, p. 1. As the former article put it: "All who belong to Christ or all true Christians have already crucified the old man. They have condemned to death all their lusts and desires, and not that alone but they have driven nails in them so they may die and be destroyed. Dear reader, have you nailed your old man to the cross so that it no longer is allowed to work its deeds through you? If not, then let me say to you as one who loves your soul: you are not a Christian; for the one who belongs to Christ has crucified the flesh with its lusts and desires."

> Judgment has already fallen, but before it can benefit a sinner who is a slave of the old man he must take this judgment to himself. He must judge himself with the Word of God and the verdict will be death, indeed the death of the cross. Thereafter he takes up his cross and follows Jesus to the place of execution, he completes the struggle by nailing every limb of the old man to the cross. This is what it means to be or become a Christian and it is this the Apostle calls the preaching of the cross. Every lust and desire to sin and to this wicked world must be nailed to the cross before a man can become a Christian and [they] must be held there until they are dead and destroyed so that a man can continue to be a Christian.[18]

The grace of God provided the power to transform the old man into the new. Guds Menighed did not often preach the pardoning grace of God, and rarely with the fervor generated while celebrating the empowering grace of God; it was the "strength and power" God grants to all who believe.[19] In their own natural frailty humans accomplish nothing of spiritual benefit, but as children of God their lives are accompanied by the Christ who gives "power to make all things new."[20] Throughout their earthly lives Christians will still struggle against their natural weakness and helplessness. As much to latter-day disciples as to the Twelve did Jesus address the reminder "without me you can do nothing."[21] But God graciously does not abandon humans in such a forlorn condition; his grace is provided as power, enabling his children to live free from both the condemnation and power of sin. Grace transforms human nature from "old man" to new creation.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Nels Renbeck, "The Old and the New Testament," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 5.

[20] Nels Renbeck, "Power from on High," DEB, June 15, 1907, p. 1.

[21] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Grace of God," DEB, November 15, 1904, p. 4.

With respect to human nature God's work is a radically transforming activity. A Christian is one who has been thus acted upon by God: "a Christian is God's work."[22] Christianity is not merely a matter of self-discipline. It is the work of God in the soul. The "inner man" is not the limit of the divine activity for God's work of grace also alters external relationships: "a Christian is separated from the world."[23] In terms of H. Richard Niebuhr's categories the model which clearly typifies Guds Menighed's relationship to culture is the radical understanding of "Christ against culture."[24] Only those who could profess the experience of salvation were entitled to the name Christian: "a Christian is a saved man. He is saved from all sin."[25] The experience of salvation was full and complete in this earthly existence. Salvation was a "present experience," not a promise of a future sinless life. Sinfree human existence was the purpose of Jesus' life and death, and was not to be postponed into eternity by the limitations of a "false doctrine" of simul justus et peccator.

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[22] C. E. Orr, "What It Means to be a Christian," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 3.

[23] Ibid.

[24] H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, Harper Torchbooks, (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), pp. 45-82.

[25] Orr, "What It Means to be a Christian," (another reference to the material cited in n. 22).

Salvation, taught the Basun, was the present experience of wholeness. The unsaved lived under judgment, in the power of sin and without health or prosperity. Each of these defects could be immediately remedied by the power of God, and the health effected by the remedy could be possessed instantaneously. It was the work of Satan that allowed some people to believe that they will be saved in the future for this hinders them from the belief that Jesus provides immediate salvation.[26] Thus salvation is a term employed to cover the divine release from all the conditions binding humans. "God will give to us the gifts of grace we need to withstand sin, Satan and the world, and [this] in order to serve God and each other . . . ."[27]

Synergism is the term which best describes Thomas Nelson's explanation of his group's doctrine of salvation. In his ordo salutis the Holy Spirit's first work is the creation of sorrow and repentance in the soul. But God forgives no person against his or her will. Sorrow and contrition produce conversion, the turning from sin and the world to God. Forgiveness cannot occur unless sinners first forsake their past follies. Yet the forsaking of sin is impossible on the strength of human effort alone. Still, one can turn away from sin with all the determination which the heart and will possess. This brings sinners to the threshold of salvation, over which they may pass only by faith, and "where the Lord himself will hasten to meet us, take us by the hand and lead us home to the Father's house."[28] Every individual must pass through these different conditions before finding genuine salvation and true peace. God himself had designed this plan of salvation and, as Nelson put matters, "we must let go of our own plans, even if they have originated in the religion of our own fathers."[29]

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[26] "The Way from Sin to Full Salvation," DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 7; following is an illustration of Guds Menighed's radical belief in present salvation: ". . . one day when we have gone out of this world and have come home to God, then there will be no need of any healing for sickness is not there . . . But now we see that when we wake from sin's sleep in this life and confess our sins and abstain from them, then the morningstar of joy is raised in our hearts and we no longer see in the future that which we already have. We have already become the bride, the Lamb's wife." "The Heavenly Jerusalem, DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 8.

[27] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "What is a Man?," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 7.

Certain actions had to be taken from the human side of this synergism, for "if the Lord's salvation is not reached, then the failure lies with the one who has not sought in the proper manner."[30] Public confession and the request for forgiveness were always the first human stages of conversion. After them followed the forsaking of sin and the world, both of which were indispensible. Withholding oneself from sin was viewed by Guds Menighed as absolutely necessary in order to receive God's mercy. The decision to cleanse oneself was a human act to which the divine response was forgiveness, liberation and the power to avoid future sin. This change of heart was the new birth, being born from above.[31] Forsaking sin and the world was a general instruction or theological principle. But the repentant sinner could not simply give assent to the teaching of renunciation. Action must follow agreement. Ill-gotten goods and wealth must be restored to their rightful owners, and the spiritual value of such restitution could be enhanced if the penitent attached interest for the time during which the goods were not in the rightful owner's possession. Where one could not make adequate restitution, public confession and a promise to restore as much as possible were adequate substitutes.[32] Restitution was enjoined upon the community through the paper and books as a principle of Christian living. No records exist to document incidents where the principle was either applied or refused.

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[28] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 15; Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 45-46.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Lord's Salvation," DEB, February 15, 1906, p. 8.

The new person in Christ was assured of salvation by an inner identification of the believer with Christ and by the believer's external behavior. The new man or woman no longer coveted the things of the world and therefore no longer sought the gratification of those carnal desires. Eternal and spiritual things were coveted instead, a holy life where one walked according to the word of God. Behavior would conform to the elevated spirituality of the new creature in Christ.[33] Yet external indicators were not the principal means of salvation's assurance. "A man who is saved and born again does not need anyone to tell him that; the Spirit of God tells him and he needs no other witness because he knows he has gone over from death to life."[34] Guds Menighed's doctrine of salvation interiorized the Kingdom of God. The kingdom was understood strictly in a spiritual sense and thus was seen to reside within the individuals who comprised the people of God. "Each inhabitant of God's kingdom lives a hidden life, hidden with Christ in God. But the result of this common life with the divine Savior will disclose itself in the outer life and conversation so that sinners will see it and admire the hidden power which works through them."[35]

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[31] C. E. Orr, "Life," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 6; "Where Will You Spend Eternity?," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 2; "Conversion," DEB, January 15, 1906, p. 3; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 39; Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 32-33.

[32] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 61; "The Way from Sin to Full Salvation," DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 6.

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[33] "The New Creation," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 2; Hans Andersen, "Salvation is an Experience, Not a Confession," DEB, October 1, 1906, p. 1; "Romans 7 and 8," (another reference to the material cited in n. 12); "Romans 7 and 8," (another reference to the material cited in n. 13); "Salvation Keeps Us from Committing Sin," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 1.

[34] "Romans 7 and 8," (another reference to the material cited in n. 12).

[35] Halfdan Stay, "The Kingdom of God," DEB, March 1, 1907, p. 1.

Den Evangeliske Basun proclaimed a new birth, salvation and citizenship in the Kingdom which were known by experience. Sinners were to be exhorted to seek God "until they have a real experience."[36] Salvation was a state of existence one could not enter through an assent to a body of doctrine. Nelson described the saying, "Each will be saved by his belief," as an "old lying proverb."[37] People could not be saved by doctrine but only through faith in Jesus Christ. Acknowledging this principle signified a consistent hostility to creeds and confessions. One could not profess saving faith in Christ and simultaneously honor "doctrines or confessions of faith;" the attempt to maintain experience and doctrinal confession deprived God of his just honor."[38] The community did not object to the content of the creeds, but to the objectivizing which it felt necessarily accompanied the construction of a creed. Thus, even the most revered symbols of Christian doctrine, the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, were viewed as objects of disdain.

Experiential religion was also preferred over intellectual efforts to understand and express Christian truth. The Basun family decidedly advocated the religion of the heart over the religion of the head. Only with great difficulty were people won to Christ through the intellect; "there is hope for them only when the Spirit gains the ability to meet their hearts . . . ."[39] The preference for heart religion extended to anti-intellectualism. Great learning or education were irrelevant to faith, which was "much more operative than human conclusions and word-games."[40] Creeds and intellectualism were no substitute for experiential salvation; neither was religious ceremony. Nelson compared the sacraments and rites of the denominational churches to the condition of the lost who slept in sin. Ceremony seduced the believer into contentment with "externals." Avoiding this seduction was vitally important.[41] Salvation's experience was the pearl of great price, not doctrine, learning or ceremony.

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[36] W. D. McCraw, "Plow New Land," DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 3; "The Fruits of the Spirit," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 2.

[37] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 53.

[38] Andersen, "Salvation is an Experience," (another reference to the material cited in n. 33).

The Christian's experience of salvation was divided by the Basun into two distinct works of grace, justification and "entire" sanctification. Guds Menighed was unshakeably loyal to the opinion that the Bible taught two equally important and separate divine actions upon the human heart.[42]

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[39] R. Rothmann, "The Holy Spirit," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 5.

[40] J. C. Forrest, "Faith," DEB, April 15, 1906, p. 3; L[ars] Christoffersen, "The Hope of the Soul," DEB, August 1, 1904, p. 3; L[ars] Christoffersen, "Jesus' Suffering," March 15, 1905, p. 2.

[41] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 36-37, et passim; Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 20-21; Halfdan Stay, "How Can We Know the Right Doctrine?," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 4.

[42] Lists of proof-tests often appeared as "conclusive" evidence of the truth of the Basun's doctrine. Following is

Justification and regeneration were used interchangeably to describe the point in life where Christ begins walking alongside the believer. Repentance, conversion, forgiveness and reconciliation were all part of this initial work of grace. But subsequent in time to this new birth was the experience of sanctification, when the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the heart of the believer. There was no dispute among the leadership of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company that the two-fold doctrine of salvation was biblical and therefore normative.[43]

Faith was the means by which men and women were sanctified. Guds Menighed defined faith as the certain belief that God hears those who call upon him and fulfills his promises according to his own good pleasure.[44] Faith is also constant; "it continues to be assured that it shall

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a list of texts cited in support of the doctrine of two works of grace: Eph. 6:10-14; John 17:16-17; Acts 26:18; Rom. 1:17; II Cor. 1:15; Rom. 12:12; II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:25-27; Phil. 2:13, 15; and Col. 3:10-11. "Grace over Grace," DEB, February 1, 1907, p. 3.

[43] All of the Basun's major contributors wrote in support of the doctrine: Mrs. S. O. Susag, "This is the Will of God, Your Sanctification," DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 3; Halfdan Stay, "Two Works of Grace," DEB, August 15, 1906, p. 8; Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 145; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 89; anonymous writers also supported entire sanctification: "The Sinful Nature," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 1; "Questions," DEB, April 15, 1906, p. 6; the Basun also translated English language articles on the doctrine written originally for the Church of God: D. O. Teasley, "Sanctification," DEB, July 15, 1906, p. 1; and E. E. Byrum, "The Two Works of Grace," DEB, November 1, 1907, p. 4.

[44] Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, p. 16.

obtain what it desires from God."[45] Saving faith was easily obtained by everyone. The only requirement was the believer's willingness to "root out of the way all hindrances, and make a firm conclusion that we can and will believe God and his word."[46]

Although faith was the instrument common to the experiences of justification and sanctification, the two works of grace were understood to have very different effects upon the human heart. Justification required sanctification to complete the _ordo salutis_. The former was a release from sin, but in a real sense was also temporary and incomplete without the finishing work of sanctification. The new Christian was holy, but only in a partial manner. Sin has been truly forgiven and the new believer stands in a new relationship with God, but "still he has the old nature or mind which must die and yield place to the mind and spirit of Christ alone."[47]

"Justification is crucifixion [of the old self], but sanctification is [its] death."[48] The latter was seen as God's second work of grace whereby old evil desires are completely put to death and laid aside. The evil, Adamic nature is cleansed in sanctification and the human tendency to sin originally implanted in the fall thereby eradicated. For Guds Menighed this was clearly taught in the Bible. Hebrews 12:14 said that without holiness "shall no one see the Lord" and the Basun took holiness to mean the cleansing effected in the instantaneous experience of entire sanctification.

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[45] "What is Faith?," _DEB_, August 1, 1904, p. 8.

[46] Nelson, _Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed_, pp. 16-17.

[47] "The Tabernacle and Its Images," _DEB_, February 1, 1904, p. 1; Nelson, _Bibel Emner_, p. 67.

[48] "The Old Man," _DEB_, June 15, 1904, p. 2; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Your Sanctification," (another reference to the material cited in n. 43); A. L. Byers, "The Second Cleansing," October 1, 1907, p. 1; Nelson, _Veien til Frelse_, p. 158.

The paper argued that sanctification was a further experience, indeed the completion, of salvation which every believer must seek. On the basis of such texts as Romans 3:24 and Ephesians 5:25-27 Guds Menighed had concluded that Scripture taught that humans could be "completely holy and pure in this world."[49] Since "can implies ought" all persons were exhorted to live up to biblical teaching on this point. But the Basun community was not simply offering a higher plane of existence for the diligent seeker who wished to exceed the gospel's requirements. Until an individual had reached perfection the will of God for that person was as yet unfulfilled.[50] Entire sanctification was demanded as the completion of God's will for his people and because of the danger inherent in the failure to seek the second blessing. Without sanctification's eradication of the tendency to sin, human nature would "again lead . . . away from God and into sin."[51] Thus there was a certain logic to the Basun's demand that believers seek the experience of sanctification: perfection is available and therefore to be sought; it is desirable in its own right but also is commanded by God; failure to seek sanctification will lead ultimately back into the sinful existence of the past.

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[49] "Sanctification," December 15, 1906, p. 6.

[50] E. E. Byrum, "Sanctified," DEB, August 1, 1907, p. 7.

The paper specified the means of entire sanctification and these were something more than a sincere desire for the second blessing; "it is not enough to hunger and thirst after holiness."[52] A favorite phrase employed by the Basun writers to describe the initial step of the process was the slogan "consecrate for sanctification." The person making this consecration "must give himself completely and indivisibly to God's will. He must be just as willing to suffer temptation and seduction as to take pleasure in blessings from the hand of the Lord . . . ."[53] But entire sanctification was not purchased through acts of self-dedication or self-denial. Like justification, perfection was made possible through the atonement and must be received by faith in it.[54] The requirement of faith clearly demonstrates that

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[51] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 77; E. A. Reardon, "How We Can Be Sanctified," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 6.

[52] Ibid., p. 7.

[53] "The Tabernacle and Its Images," DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 2.

[54] Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, p. 83, "Sanctification," DEB, December 15, 1906, p. 6.

Guds Menighed understood sanctification as an act of divine grace. The seeker who depended upon the human act of consecration only found dejection. "But by taking into account God's love, grace and steadfastness, the soul obtains liberty to say yes to all the will of God."[55] The Basun family understood grace as power, an enabling of the individual to bear the whole yoke of God's law. This empowering of the human race was the special mission of the Holy Spirit, whose most important task was the restoration of redeemed humanity to its former holiness.[56]

The promise of the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit was not given to sinners. The believer must first love Christ and keep his commandments and only then could he anticipate the coming of the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth.[57] The means of sanctification thus became the conditions of its reception. The Basun could speak of three "conditions" which must be met before sanctification could occur: crucifixion of the old self, "perfect consecration or dedication to God for time and eternity," and faith. "Continue to believe until you come to faith's full assurance or until you are quite certain that you are sanctified to the Lord, and then the experience is yours."[58] Only the person thus totally dedicated to God could expect the experience of sanctification:

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[55] Reardon, "Sanctified," (another reference to material cited in n. 51).

[56] C. E. Orr, "The Trinity," DEB, August 1, 1906, p. 4.

[57] Mary Heldenbrand, "Sanctification," DEB, August 1, 1906, p. 4.

> He must present his body to God, his time, his abilities and his earthly possessions, to be employed as the Lord shows and leads. He must be willing to go wherever the Lord leads, even if it should be to India, China or Africa. He must be willing to lay down his life for the Gospel of Jesus Christ or for the brethren. The one who has thus dedicated himself and all that is his to God can believe with ease that the Holy Spirit will sanctify him.[59]

Entire sanctification was regarded by _Guds Menighed_ as the foundation of a holy life, the beginning of perfect liberty from sin.[60] To possess a heart free from sin and enmity and completely devoted to Christ was the _Basun's_ picture of Christian perfection. This perfection was not the goal of Christian living; it was the foundation. In its strong emphasis on perfection _Guds Menighed_ demonstrates the reality of its Wesleyan rather than Lutheran theology. A 1907 _Basun_ description of justification and regeneration is almost a verbatim repetition of John Wesley's definitions in his sermon, "Justification by Faith."[61] Uncharacteristic of Wesley, however, Guds Menighed generally was content to define perfection in negative terms: "a heart completely free from anger, pride, foolishness, desire, all lusts of the flesh, . . . secret sin, . . . [the] inward principle of the heart which is externally demonstrated by costly clothes, the use of all sorts of gold and jewels . . . [and] . . . flowers, feathers and other superfluous tricking out of dress."[62] In response to the question, "What is meant in the Bible by perfection?," Martha Susag summarized Guds Menighed's negative definition of Christian perfection. In this 1907 article she explained that Christians were called by God to live a Christ-like life. In order to accomplish such an expectation the sinful nature must be removed. Then she said, "To be perfect in God's eyes is to be completely free from all sin, to be pure of all unholy thoughts, all impure thoughts and all sinful deeds. To be perfect is to be holy, just as free from sin here as we expect to be in heaven. This is the experience of the sanctified."[63]

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[58] Nelson, _Veien til Frelse_, p. 163, _et passim_; Nelson, _Bibel Emner_, pp. 93-98, _et passim_.

[59] J. C. Blaney, "Perfect Sanctification," _DEB_, July 1, 1907, p. 2.

[60] Heldenbrand, "Sanctification," (another reference to the material cited in n. 57).

[61] "[Justification] is not the being made actually just and righteous. This is _sanctification_; which is, indeed, in some degree, the immediate fruit of justification, but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies, what God does

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for us through His Son; the other, what He works in us by His Spirit." John Wesley, "Justification by Faith," in Sermons on Several Occasions, (London: Epworth Press, 1944), p. 52: "Re-birth is performed simultaneously with justification; although there is some difference in their nature, both however happen in the same moment. Justification is a work performed for us and the re-birth is a work performed in us . . . Justification is a forgiveness of sin and re-birth is a new birth in our soul: it is a new creation." G. W. Grary, "Justification and Re-birth," DEB, January 1, 1907, p. 1.

[62] J. C. Blaney, "Perfect in Christ," DEB, October 1, 1905, p. 2.

[63] M[artha] S[usag], "Questions," DEB, October 15,

The Basun community's definition of Christian perfection sharply differed from interpretations of the doctrine offered by late nineteenth century Methodists. This dispute might be partially explained by the religious radicalism of certain holiness groups like the Church of God. Another explanation of Guds Menighed's differences with Methodists over the doctrine of perfection can be found in the willingness of perfectionist liberals and conservatives to espouse positions on the doctrine more extreme than either would adopt in the absence of the other. In the case of the holiness movement this tendency to polarization produced two interpretations of Christian perfection neither of which accorded with Wesley's views on the subject.[64] Whether because of its radicalism, a polarized view of perfection, or simply that the group felt no particular loyalty for John Wesley, clearly Guds Menighed taught a doctrine of Christian perfection at some remove from that of Wesley or its Methodist contemporaries. Holiness was now the foundation, rather than the goal, of Christian living.

1907, p. 5. The negative definition was the commonly accepted usage. Occasionally exceptions appeared, as in this mystically oriented definition by C. E. Orr: ". . . perfect union with God in the same mind and understanding." C. E. Orr, "Christian Perfection," DEB, June 15, 1906, p. 2.

[64] For differing interpretations of the holiness movement see Charles Edwin Jones, Perfectionist Persuasion: American Methodism and the Holiness Movement, 1867-1936, (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1974); John Leland Peters, Christian Perfection and American Methodism, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956); and Timothy L. Smith, Called Unto Holiness: The Story of the Nazarenes, (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962).

Den Evangeliske Basun explained perfection as God's command to all Christians. It repeated a series of favorite New Testament texts in support of its interpretation of sanctification as obligation.[65] Rasmus Nielsen wrote from Albert Lea, Minnesota to complain of the "dark teaching that one cannot other than sin in thought, word and deed." People who believed they could sin and still "in one way or another participate in heaven" were quite outside the word of Scripture. Every Christian ought to testify as the apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; however not I any longer, but Christ lives in me."[66] Any person could discern between the child of God with this testimony and an unbeliever who still was in sin. "John says, 'Anyone who commits sin is of the devil . . . every one of those who is born of God does not sin . . .;' thereby are the children of God and the children of the devil known."[67] Christian perfection, defined and measured by adherence to a set of mores and customs, gave *Guds Menighed* the transcendent ethic which shaped their community. Only those were permitted within the community who could satisfactorily testify to the experience of entire sanctification and who could demonstrate that experience by obedience to a moral code; sin and sinners were ostracized.

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[65] "Sanctification," *DEB*, December 1, 1906, p. 1.

[66] Rasmus Nielsen, a letter from Albert Lea, Minnesota in "Testimonies," *DEB*, August 15, 1905, p. 5.

[67] "Questions," *DEB*, May 1, 1904, p. 4.

John Wesley often employed the term "perfect love" as a synonym for entire sanctification. His followers in the holiness movement continued this practice. But Guds Menighed did not emphasize the equation of agape and sanctification, one which might be termed a positive definition of perfection. Instead it chose to underscore the negative explanation of the experience, freedom from sin. In the comparatively few locations where Basun writers did use the phrase "perfect love" they tended to regard it as an experience which was preceeded by entire sanctification.[68]

At some risk of tautology it is important to note the Basun conceived Christian perfection as a "perfected work." Numerous Bible verses were adduced to emphasize the point that "God will sanctify us wholly and completely; sanctification is a perfected work, through which the saved one's heart becomes wholly and completely pure."[69] From the paper's point of view "limited holiness" was impossible. "Purity does not admit of degrees; it only exists in the superlative."[70] The Basun taught its readers that, armed with the keeping grace of God, they could not only attain but maintain the sinless life. "This perfecting, cleansing, sanctifying grace is kept by faith . . . ."[71]

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[68] Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, pp. 81-84 passim; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Your Sanctification," (another reference to the material cited in n. 43).

[69] "Perfect Holiness," DEB, November 15, 1906, p. 7.

[70] "One can just as well ask how round a circle is as one can ask how pure is a sanctified life." Ibid.

The Basun family clearly understood its deviation from confessionalist Lutheran teaching on the subject of human nature and salvation. Thomas Nelson quoted from the fourth article of the Small Catechism Luther's idea that "the old Adam, with all sins and wicked desires, shall die and be drowned by daily repentance and prayer."[72] Nelson interpreted Luther to mean "we . . . sanctify ourselves with tears and by righting the wrong we have done."[73] There is more than a little irony in a view of Luther which portrays him as a proponent of "sanctification by works," and yet Nelson did precisely that. But he does not appear to have been motivated by any malice toward Luther, for Nelson described the Reformer as a "man of God" who understood the human need for sanctification. In Nelson's eyes, Luther's shortcoming was his failure to "get light" on the truth that Christians are sanctified by faith without human merit.[74]

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[71] Blaney, "Perfect in Christ," (another reference to material cited in n. 62), p. 3.

[72] Nelson does not identify his source, nor does he complete the sentence from which his quotation was lifted. In full it reads: "It [baptism] signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous, to live forever in God's presence." "The Small Catechism" in Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., The Book of Concord, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 349.

[73] Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, pp. 27-28.

[74] Ibid., "Sanctification," DEB, December 15, 1906, pp. 5-6.

Nelson seems to be contending against Luther less than against Lutheranism. But one should not conclude that Nelson was making a sophisticated historical distinction between Luther and the Lutheran scholastic theologians of the seventeenth century. It is far more likely that Nelson's true opponent here was the Small Catechism, which was the body of Lutheran doctrine with which Nelson would have been most familiar. Insofar as the catechism taught that the old Adam could successfully be mortified or that the sinful human nature was a permanent condition of humanity, then as far as Nelson was concerned the catechism taught false doctrine. Luther might be the original source of this teaching, but Nelson was prepared to treat him more gently than his own Lutheran contemporaries.

In this connection two significant omissions might also be mentioned. *Guds Menighed* might have supported its general case against what it termed formalist Lutherans by quoting from the profuse literature of Scandinavian pietists such as the Norwegian *Lutherstiftelse*, the Danish *Indre Mission*, or the Swedish *laesare*. However these European pietistic sources are conspicuously absent from the pages of *Den Evangeliske Basun* and *Evangelii Trumpet*. The same must be said for *Guds Menighed's* radical free church doctrine, which shows no evidence of being founded on a knowledge of or familiarity with the radical reformation. The St. Paul Park community was uninterested in presenting a case for itself as an extension of either pietism or the left wing of the reformation. Instead it identified itself as an extension of the New Testament church and was content with the picture of itself which it found there.

The experience of sanctification was the natural result of God's work in the soul. He intended several outcomes in the lives of those of his people who had been perfected. They could expect divine "preservation from the evil one in this life." Sanctification was also divinely intended as preparation for the service of God and the basis of the hope of some day seeing the Lord. "But our Lord's greatest and most glorious intention for our sanctification in this life is certainly the perfect unity among believers which this experience always produces . . . ."[75]

Guds Menighed believed that entire sanctification was intimately connected with the ideal of Christian unity. Indeed sanctification was the only means of achieving the unity of all true believers. For the Basun family the correct approach to achieving the unity of all Christians was one that led "believers to a perfect sanctification and allows the Holy Spirit alone to bind their hearts with God's unbreakable love, which is the bond of perfectness . . . ."[76] This was the Lord's only remedy for "sectarianism and division." Only sanctification provided the experience whereby believers could be cleansed not only from the "old man" but also "old doctrine." Cleansed believers would no longer allow the ". . . old mind to divide and separate themselves from each other as well as from God's true saints on earth."[77]

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[75] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 193.

[76] Ibid., p. 199.

Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17 was interpreted by the Basun family in such a manner as to link the petitions for the disciples' sanctity and unity. Thus "entire sanctification works unity just as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one."[78] Those who are sanctified therefore are also unified. Since sanctification carried with it the unity of the believer's will with that of the Heavenly Father, the former could automatically discern whether or not any doctrine was really of God. "Heresy has its headquarters in the heart . . . ,"[79] but sanctification is the experience of heart cleansing; ". . . it is precisely the work of sanctification to cleanse from all sin, take away division and fashion into one (John 17:19, 21); so the one who defends a heresy is unsanctified."[80]

Heresy and perfect Christians could not co-exist in the same church. Hence it was impossible for believers to be sanctified and continue in denominations since part of the second blessing's purpose was to produce the unity of believers. Beyond the logic of its own theology, *Guds Menighed* also found in its typological hermeneutic Biblical warrants for linking sanctification and unity. Considering the Israelite tabernacle an image of the New Testament church, the *Basun* family went on to interpret the priestly class as the model ". . . of those who not only have been awakened from sin's sleep, but who have become re-born to a living hope."[81] Since only priests were admitted to the tabernacle's sanctuary *Guds Menighed's* conclusion was that only the sanctified, the type of the priestly class, were permitted membership in the true church, the type of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The New Testament church was, and is, composed only of sanctified Christians. In order for God to "bind us together with the bond which never breaks,"[82] believers must quit the confusion of the denominations for the only place where holiness and sound doctrine can be found--the New Testament church of God.

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Sanctification," DEB, September 15, 1904, p. 6.

[79] Chris Holte, "The Gospel of Salvation," DEB, May 1, 1906, p. 3.

[80] Ibid.

The Doctrine of the Church

Guds Menighed's doctrine of sanctification flowed in uninterrupted fashion directly into its doctrine of the church. These were the twin issues which were the community's *raison d'etre*. Thomas Nelson demonstrates the intimacy of this connection in *Veien til Frelse, Fred og det Aandelige*

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[81] "The Tabernacle and Its Images," *DEB*, January 15, 1904, p. 1.

[82] "Questions," *DEB*, July 15, 1904, p. 4.

Liv. Included in a list of sins which the new believer must forsake in order to be truly saved was the following demand:

> You may neither belong to or be found in religious parties or sects. The church of God consists of all the children of God, and God himself admits us into the church (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:13) by forgiving us our sins and accepting us as his children. If you would be a child of God you will belong to the only church God recognizes, for there is no other in the Bible. The churches which men have founded are not the church of God, but [are] religious parties which you must forsake.[83]

The Basun family's theology of history has already been described as a crucial ingredient in the formation of the group's ethno-religious identity. That theology was the rationale for the group's identity and a vehicle for their explanation of the nature and purpose of the church. Ecclesiology occupied the center of Guds Menighed's dogmatics, in terms both of the group's sense of the doctrine's importance and as the intellectual construct which served to define the group itself. Thus far only the Basun family's theology of history has been examined. Now attention must be focused on its full doctrine of the church.

The community built its doctrine of the church on the belief that Jesus had founded the church in "32 a.d.," and that since "in the year 59 and thereafter" believers were described by New Testament writers as a spiritual house, the construction begun by Christ had already been completed. Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which it occasioned was the actual event in which the church was ordered and finished. In such passages as I Corinthians 12:6, 13, 18, and 24 Scripture testified to the veracity of this conclusion. From this line of reasoning followed the argument that since the church of God was founded in the New Testament era "every religious association" coming into existence at any subsequent point in time could not be the church of God. Instead they are all "daughters of confusion and disorder born in unrighteous times."[84]

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[83] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 38-39.

The Bible was the standard for measuring the church and in the judgment of Guds Menighed all of Protestantism was "unscriptural." Protestants could not legitimately claim to be the one body of Christ. Neither could they claim spiritual unity, for one spirit could not possibly produce such a variety of conflicting doctrines.[85] Protestants (and Catholics) also evidenced their unscripturalness in the ferocious manner in which they had persecuted "the church of God on earth." Anglican persecutors of John Bunyan, Calvinists who burned people at the stake and Lutherans who fined the "children of God" for conducting prayer-meetings were historical demonstrations of the unscriptural nature of Protestantism.[86]

Neither taken as a whole nor in any single group could Protestant churches be considered the result of the leading of the Holy Spirit. But that was not to say there were no true children of God among Protestants. Scattered as they were, true believers in the denominational churches exemplified, however, the manner in which Protestants had "ripped to fragments the body of Christ which is the church, with the knife of factionalism, so that in later times it is found only limb for limb instead of as a whole body."[87] Guds Menighed did not mean to say that there had been no true church at any point in history after the close of the New Testament era. But periods of unity among Christians were severely limited in both number and extent. Writers pointed, for example, to the decade between 1520 and 1530 as a time when there was a church "not founded by human hands, but which was the work of the Holy Spirit. The children of God were separated from the world and from Catholicism and they were not known as Lutherans or Reformed or any other human organization."[88] Guds Menighed knew that its Protestant contemporaries believed that the New Testament church had been one and had possessed all truth. If they could accept that much, asked the Basun, then why not belong to the same church it was proclaiming, the one which has the whole truth? "There is no necessity for any other church on earth."[89]

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[84] "What is the Church?," DEB, November 15, 1907, p. 2.

[85] "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 2.

[86] Ibid., p. 3.

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[87] "The Church in the Wilderness," DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 1, *et passim*.

[88] Ibid.

[89] N.n., n.t., DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 4.

In contrast to the usage among the unscriptural churches, the paper said, "when we employ the word 'church' we always ought to assign it such meaning as agrees with the Word of God."[90] On the basis of Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:24 the true church was defined as the body of Christ. Obvious logic required Christ's body to include all his members. The truth is therefore subverted when people label a denomination, which is at best a fragment of the whole, as the church, which is the whole body of Christ.[91] In fact the names by which churches are known honor humans or forms of church polity in place of God. No such names as Methodist, Lutheran or Episcopal are found in Scripture.[92] _Guds_ _Menighed_ was not content with a general description of the church as the body of Christ. That body had some distinguishing marks which differentiated it from all illegitimate rivals. These marks were (1) the salvation of sinners, (2) the sanctification of believers and (3) the divine healing of the sick "from all sorts of diseases."[93]

As the body of Christ the church consists of all those who are in faith united in Christ.[94] But justification in faith is not the final condition of men and women in the church. Indeed, "in the case of the baptism of an unsanctified believer the baptism really signifies more than what has yet been reached."[95] It was God's intention that all those who had been justified experience a "step upward to perfect sanctification, which is the church of God's normal condition."[96] In the gracious acts of justification and sanctification God placed men and women in the church. To those already in the body of Christ he also granted different gifts of grace, among which is the gift of healing. Numerous biblical verses were listed to "persuade every upright soul that there is healing in the church of God."[97] Even the slightest suggestion that God no longer placed the gift of healing in the church was tantamount to the conclusion that the church of God had been inconstant since its construction by Christ and the Holy Spirit.[98]

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[90] "What is the Church?," (another reference to material cited in n. 83).

[91] Ibid. [92] Nelson, _Bibel Emner_, p. 185.

[93] H. M. Riggle, "Revelation 12:1-6," _DEB_, November 15, 1907, p. 1.

[94] "The Church of God," _DEB_, October 15, 1906, p. 2; Nelson, _Bibel Emner_, pp. 187-189.

Jesus was the true church's only founder. "Christ said, 'On this rock (not Luther, Wesley or any other man) I will build my church . . . .'"[99] To Den Evangeliske Basun this verse alone was proof that Jesus is the sole founder of the church. "He is the only stone which God himself has chosen for the foundation of his church."[100] As its founder Christ is the church's head and governing authority. Confessions of faith, church legal codes and systems of cooperation are products of humanly devised organizations which, by the creation of such systems of authority, fail to recognize the true head of the church. "These law-giving synods and general conferences ignore the divine law-giver, seize for themselves Christ's place, and put themselves in the place of God. Such is not Christ's church, for it is subject to Christ."[101]

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[95] A. L. Byers, "The Second Cleansing," (another reference to the material cited in n. 17).

[96] Ibid.

[97] Halfdan Stay, "The Healing of our Bodies Included in the Plan of Salvation," DEB, September 1, 1907, p. 8.

[98] Ibid.

[99] "The Church in the Wilderness," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 1; Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 186-187.

Christ is not only the church's head; he is also its door-keeper. To enter his church one must come through him in faith. Unlike the means of admission to the unscriptural churches, penitent sinners could enter the church of God only by first experiencing "the baptism of the Word, the power of the blood and the anointing of the Spirit."[102] The new birth was taught by Guds Menighed as the single legitimate means of admission to the church. "In their own parties men can admit [other men], for they are merely works of men. But in the one true church they cannot, for this God has reserved this to himself . . . . This cannot be misunderstood.

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[100] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "God's House," DEB, March 15, 1907, p. 2; Keo A. Nelson, "The Foundation," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 6.

[101] "What is the Church?," (another reference to material cited in n. 84); "When Men Shall Build a Church," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 3; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 186.

[102] "The Tabernacle and Its Images," (another reference to material cited in n. 11); "The Church of God," (another reference to the material cited in n. 94).

It is the Father who by his Spirit through Jesus Christ admits us into his family, which is the church."[103]

Membership in the true church is initiated by regeneration and consummated in entire sanctification; "nothing unclean will enter the church of God and no one who sins can continue in the church of God."[104] In setting this segment of its ecclesiology squarely in the believers' church tradition, Guds Menighed simultaneously opposed the magisterial conception of the church which was operative in all the Scandinavian countries. As in the doctrine of human nature, so in ecclesiology the immigrants of Guds Menighed were quite aware of their differences with the Lutherans. In an article appearing in the May 15, 1905 issue of Den Evangeliske Basun, an anonymous writer took exception to an un-named Lutheran minister's exposition of Jesus' parable of the wheat and tares [Mt. 13:24-29]. According to the Lutheran the wheatfield's mixed character was a description of the church, which blends redeemed and sinner. The Basun writer responded that this interpretation flies in the face of St. Paul's description of the church in Ephesians 5:25-27 where it is described as without spot or wrinkle. Moreover, Jesus himself explains [Mt. 13:36-38] that the wheatfield is a symbol of the world and not the church of God. As long ago as the Apostolic era the true church was separate "from the world and the unsaved or worldly-minded man."[105] The article concluded with a benediction for all the Lord's true children, "that they no longer keep themselves in these tare-bundles."[106] Favorable comparisons of the church and weed-filled grainfield might be possible among the humanly devised churches but they would never be satisfactory in "God's true, pure, and holy church."[107]

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[103] "The Church of God," (another reference to the material cited in n. 94); Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 195; J. E. Forrest, "Our New Birth into God's Family," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 6; "Which Church Will Take Us to Heaven," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 1; "What is the Church?," (another reference to the material cited in n. 84); "The Tabernacle and Its Images," (another reference to the material cited in n. 11); "The Church in the Wilderness," (another reference to the material cited in n. 99).

[104] Nels Renbeck, "The Church of God," DEB, September 1, 1905, p. 1; Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 189-194; "The Church of God," (another reference to the material cited in n. 94). Anonymous rhetorical questions frequently appeared as spacers in the columns of Den Evangeliske Basun. One such question, coupled with the paper's conclusion, amply illustrates the community's opinion on this matter: "Are you without spot or blemish, holy and blameless? If not, then you do not belong to the church which Jesus will take to himself when he comes." DEB, March 1, 1907, p. 4.

Guds Menighed's doctrine of the church identified Christ as the founder and all experientially "saved and sanctified" believers as members. The community then proceeded to identify the Holy Spirit as the organizer of the church. By this idea they meant to oppose all forms of ecclesiastical organization. The Basun community was not a loose collection of religious anarchists; they did not advocate the complete absence of church order. The point of their attack on denominational Christianity was that while God organizes the church, ". . . denominations merely organized themselves;"[108] only the Holy Spirit could organize the church.

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[105] "Tares Among the Wheat," DEB, May 15, 1905, p. 2ff.

[106] Ibid. [107] Ibid.

The church was administered by the Spirit in the distribution of charismatic gifts. This was the pattern of organization observed by the Basun in the New Testament church and no sound reason had appeared for abandoning that divinely ordained government. "Priest-schools" and "minister-factories" were without New Testament precedent and therefore contrary to the Spirit's method of gifting those who are set apart for ministry. When biblical church order was followed carefully believers would watch "the little gathered flock until the gifts which the Lord gave each of his own children (Eph. 4:7-16) came to view. Then they laid hands on those whom the Holy Spirit has placed as supervisors over the church of God (Acts 20:28), not to make them into pastors or teachers, but to own themselves what God had already done."[109]

The charismata were regarded as the means by which God saves, preserves, edifies and unifies human beings. Without these spiritual gifts the Basun considered religion a dead, empty form. Among people who stressed the subjective experience of salvation a proportionately greater amount of attention also had to be devoted to instructing group members in methods of discerning between true and false gifts of the Spirit. Thomas Nelson thus advised his readers to avoid spiritualists, hypnotists and Christian Scientists. These groups were "tools of Satan" which seduced the spiritually naive into "his churches."[110] Nelson appears to have been fairly well versed in Christian Science. He knew of Mary Baker Eddy's recent death and the "book [that] is held as highly as the scriptures themselves."[111] Christian Science's emphasis on healing would quite naturally be perceived by immigrants as a doctrine held in common with Guds Menighed's emphasis on divine healing. In reality the two were at some distance from one another, Christian Science being much more metaphysically grounded than Guds Menighed. But Nelson took great pains to make the distinction obvious to his readers. His concern was motivated by the conviction that "the Lord works with his Spirit and through his means of grace."[112] These were manifested as love, peace, humility and meekness. While rivals might be able to demonstrate considerable activity and even a counterfeit power, apart from the four identifiers of the Spirit's activity even the most compelling demonstrations were "only seduction and falsehood."[113]

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[108] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 209.

[109] "The Church in the Wilderness," (another reference to the material cited in n. 99).

In the Basun's eyes artificial means of securing qualities resembling the charismata were nearly as offensive as outright false gifts. This attitude was a major source of the group's antipathy toward formal ministerial training,

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[110] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 228-232. [111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid., p. 238. [113] Ibid.

Seminaries only pretended to educate for ministry, for "no man can teach another man to preach the gospel. For it is the work of the Holy Spirit."[114] The community did not generally oppose education, only a specific form of professional training which it believed usurped the Spirit's role as gifter, i.e. organizer, of the church. Criticism of seminary-trained ministers extended to some strongly negative observations on their preaching, which the Basun said was composed of fables and stories calculated to fill time ~~or~~ captivate and entertain the congregation. Such sermons "do not reach the heart, and sinners who hear [them] will never be persuaded of their lost condition and watch unto conversion as it happened in the Apostles' time."[115] Some believers were called to ministry by the Holy Spirit, who evidenced this vocation by gifting them for the performance of their task. From the Basun's perspective only this charismatically endowed ministry was legitimate and only it could produce the genuine results of ministry which were also the marks of the true church: the conversion of sinners, the sanctification of believers, and the divine healing of the sick and infirm.

The true church was founded by Christ, organized by the Holy Spirit and composed of sanctified believers, which made it whole and holy. But Guds Menighed did not find much

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[114] "The Church in the Wilderness," (another reference to the material cited in n. 99).

[115] Chris Holte, "Right Doctrine and Right Teachers," DEB, March 1, 1907, p. 4.

evidence of the true church in the Christianity practiced in early twentieth century America. So a sizeable segment of their ecclesiology was devoted to a critique of contemporary church groups. This was a means for comparing what the Basun considered the true church with Christianity as it had become confused in "Babel" or "Babylon."

Much as the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, denominations were the result of human pride.[116] Each claimed to be the church, but great disharmony and even confusion were apparent to the Basun as the various church bodies struggled with each other over doctrinal and hermeneutical differences. In spite of the bewildering array of competitors, each claimed to belong to the one body of Christ. The Basun asked in a dismay tinged with gleeful irony, "How can this be?" The magazine answered its own question by arguing that the spirit of denominationalism was in fact the spirit of Antichrist. In that they divided the body of Christ denominations were antithetical to God's church. Their numerous divisions promoted confusion and that was a synonym for the "Babylon which is mentioned in Revelation."[117]

In the eyes of Guds Menighed the clearest indication of denominationalism's opposition to God was the unholy lives of their members. In the true church one could not love the world and partake of its entertainments without destroying his or her standing in the body of believers. But in "sect-Babylon" ". . . respected church members may be envious and slanderous, unfriendly to neighbor and hateful to enemy, use tobacco and liquor, dress in jewels and costly clothing and still retain their place of favor in their church."[118] The Basun called such practices sheer hypocrisy; the true church was holy and pure and the reputations of all its members were unsullied by even so much as a breath of scandal.

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[116] "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 2.

[117] Martha Susag, "The Apostacy," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 2; "Babylon is Fallen," (another reference to the material cited in n. 116).

Denominations did however contain some true believers, and Guds Menighed therefore believed its task in part was to "thrash Babylon," separate Godly wheat from the chaff of "worldly professors," those who made an outward profession of Christian faith but who failed to live the Christian life. After all, the bride of Christ had to be prepared for the Lord's return.[119] Among Scandinavian immigrants Guds Menighed saw itself as a portion of the true church, protesting and correcting the fallen condition of Christendom. Denominations would continue to exist, but true children of God no longer had reason to continue in them when they might free themselves from the yoke of this Babel and step out into the light of Guds Menighed, a segment of the restored New Testament church. Aiding "our Scandinavian folk" to see this truth was the divinely appointed task of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company.

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[118] Micala Simonsen, "Christian Life," DEB, February 1, 1907, p. 4.

[119] "The Church in the Wilderness," (another reference to the material cited in n. 99); Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Straying," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 6.

Guds Menighed was commissioned to thrash Babylon not only for the sake of the "sin in sectism" but also because of the "sin of sectism."[120] The division of the body of Christ into denominations was regarded as an inherently evil act. "That which causes division among God's children is carnality. Self-righteousness and self-will justify themselves and find their followers, fashion a party and separate themselves from the body."[121] The Basun felt called to expose the offense of what it termed the "sect-system," the toleration of one denomination for another despite doctrinal differences. Once denominationalism's evils were manifest true believers would "flee their society and associations as from a poisonous snake."[122] Thrashing Babel was necessary, finally, because "there is certainly not a biblical doctrine more misunderstood than the doctrine of the church."[123] Guds Menighed sought the clarification of that misunderstanding.

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[120] "An Interesting Question," DEB, November 15, 1905, p. 3.

[121] Renbeck, "The Church of God," DEB, October 1, 1905, p. 1; n.n., n.t., DEB, November 15, 1905, p. 4. This column spacer illustrates the logic by which Guds Menighed argued that it was not a denomination [sect] while all others were: "We do not name ourselves, nor save ourselves, nor unite ourselves. God saves us, unites us, names us. Wherein is this different from a sect? Sect-members unite themselves assume their name, and only a few of them know anything of salvation . . . . To become a sect we must separate ourselves from the people of God, which are united in one by the Holy Spirit, found another society, a rival organization, appoint a human superior, and we ourselves will name the organization, constitute our own offices and give our officials authority, decide the doctrine they will prefer, and make the laws we wish to obey or uphold. We will not do this; therefore we cannot become a sect."

[122] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "New Year's Greetings," DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 1.

A special vocabulary was employed to reinforce distinctions made in the Basun between denominational churches and the true church. The Dano-Norwegian language in which the paper was published had several nouns which might be translated into English as "church." Each of these terms had an ecclesiological connotation associated with it. Most Scandinavian readers of the paper would have been aware of the distinctions connoted by each term. The standard word kirke was used in the Scandinavian homelands to refer to the Lutheran state churches. The Basun's editorial staff used kirke in reference to denominational groups, as in Lutherske Kirke, occasionally in the sense of the church universal, as in almindelige kirke, but virtually never as the term for the true church of God, which would be Guds Kirke. Only very sporadically will a reader use the phrase Guds Kirke in a letter of testimony, but the regular Basun writers almost always employ kirke in a perjorative sense associated with formalism, a dead orthodoxy and spurious claim to be the true church. Samfund, the Dano-Norwegian for "association," is also used in this perjorative sense as a rough equivalent for the English "denomination."[124]

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[123] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 183.

The magazine contrasted the negative term kirke with the Dano-Norwegian word for "community" or "congregation," menighed. The term had been used by Lutheran pietists in Scandinavia in reference to the small, voluntaristic meetings often associated with pietism. Den Evangeliske Basun universally employed the term as a synonym for the true church, and its Scandinavian readers and followers were known to each other as Guds Menighed, the Church of God. A paragraph from the Basun's first volume illustrates the method by which the group set menighed over against kirke.

> When they [New Testament evangelists] had preached once in a place and men were converted to God and found salvation and peace in Jesus Christ, they did not tell these newly converted ones that now they must join themselves to a kirke, or with the kirke. But they told them that now they were the body of Christ, or Guds Menighed, and each a special member (I Cor. 12:27) . . . . This was the only menighed which Christians recognized in the Apostles' days.[125]

Scandinavian readers of Den Evangeliske Basun could not have mistaken the paper's distinction between menighed and kirke. It was a signal assuring immigrants of the

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[124] Susag, "Apostacy," (another reference to the material cited in n. 117); Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 334; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 188.

[125] "The Church in the Wilderness," (another reference to the material cited in n. 99); similar distinctions are made in the following: Susag, "Apostacy," (another reference to the material cited in n. 117); Riggle, "Revelation 12:1-6," (another reference to the material cited in n. 93); Thomas Nelson, "The Communion of the Saints," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 1; and especially, Caspar Holmen, "A Church [menighed] or A Church [kirke]," DEB, January 1, 1906, p. 3.

Basun's pietistic orientation, one similar in approach and emphases to that of pietists in the homeland, Hans N. Hauge, Kristen Madsen, Peter Wieselgren and others. But Guds Menighed was not attempting to portray itself simply as the Scandinavian-American successor to European pietism. The paper quotes no pietist authors, nor does it refer by name or allusion to any Scandinavian pietist leaders. The Basun borrows a term from pietism as a way of contrasting its work with that of groups it considered pretenders; they were kirke, not menighed.[126] Ideas associated with each term by immigrants remembering homeland usages furthered the Basun's purposes. From the beginning of Scandinavian immigration to the United States, many Norwegians, Swedes and Danes did not remember fondly the state churches of their homeland.[127]

The goal of Guds Menighed's ecclesiology was the re-establishment of the church's unity. This was their desire because they perceived it as God's as well.[128] All who truly were children of God would strive toward this goal.[129] Christ has only one body, therefore only one church. No children of God are outside this church and therefore neither are there any outside this church who are children of God.[130] As the family of God the church must be one. To say God can have more than one church was as scandalous in the Basun's eyes as to say that a person can have more than one spouse.[131]

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[126] Perhaps the most telling illustration of the Basun's perjorative use of kirke is found in Nelson's repeated references to the "Mormon kirke." Only once does he employ menighed, and that usage is as follows: ". . . the Mormons' so-called church [menighed] of Christ." Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 138.

[127] E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold, The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans, vol. 1, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960), p. 12; Enok Mortensen, The Danish Lutheran Church in America, (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1969), pp. 15-50, passim; George M. Stephenson, The Religious Aspects, pp. 3-10; Theordore C. Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America, vol. 1, (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931), p. 46.

[128] "Questions," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 4.

Other Christians recognized the scandal of a divided church and were also struggling with a means of recovering Christian unity. The Basun noted some of these efforts and routinely condemned them for seeking union or a unity unfaithful to the New Testament standard. Articles heavily critical of unity movements among Scandinavians appear in the paper.[132] Of interest also is the Basun's disdainful attack on the World Parliament of Religions held at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. Fourteen years later the magazine was still criticizing the World Parliament as an example of the mistaken desire for a unity "fashioned by human hands." The World Parliament of Religions "is of course not spiritual unity and therefore is not of God."[133]

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[129] Nels Renbeck, "Unity in the Faith," DEB November 1, 1906, p. 8.

[130] Halfdan Stay, "A Comparison Between the Church of God and Babylon," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 1.

[131] "What is the Church?," DEB, December 1, 1907, p. 3.

[132] "A False Unity," DEB, October 15, 1907, pp. 2-3.

The Basun claimed that the only unity evident among the denominations was their common opposition to a real, Biblical doctrine of salvation. In the paper's point of view this of course included the experience of entire sanctification.[134] The unity of all Christians would only be realized when the fruits of the Spirit conferred in sanctification were spread among all true believers. This had been the dynamic of the early church's unity, it was the dynamic of the unity enjoyed by the saints in heaven and the only possible source of unity for the present people of God on earth. The perfect love given by the Holy Spirit in sanctification produced the church's unity.[135] Where that love existed only one mind, one heart, one truth and one spirit would be present.[136] "In the Apostles' times all believers were of one heart and soul and so it is today. For it cannot be otherwise if we believe. The Word of God is true, John 17:17. But perhaps you will concede that therefore it is not the [true] church to which you belong."[137]

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[133] Ibid.; "The Original Church," DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 8; for more opinion that real Christian unity is grounded in the activity of the Holy Spirit rather than human efforts at union see E. G. Masters, "Biblical Unity," November 1, 1907, p. 1.

[134] "The Unity of the Spirit," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 2; "What is the Church?," DEB, December 15, 1907, p. 2; "The Church of God," (another reference to the material cited in n. 94).

[135] Nels Renbeck, "The True and the False," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 1; Renbeck, "Unity in the Faith," (another reference to the material cited in n. 128); Heldenbrand, "Sanctification," (another reference to the material cited in n. 57); "Unity," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 7; "What is the Church?," (another reference to the material cited in n. 133); Masters, "Biblical Unity," (another reference to the material cited in n. 132); Peder Pederson, "Unity on the Ground of the Bible," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 5; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 108 and pp. 200-205, passim; Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 330-331.

Unlike all denominations the Church of God was not a part of the body of Christ, ". . . but it is the whole body."[138] Those who received the Basun's gospel moved out of Babylon's darkness into the light of the true church. "Coming out" of Babylon was not a step into a new sect. Those who left denominations for Guds Menighed now belonged "to one church founded more than eighteen hundred years ago, and which has always been on earth since that time, and which shall continue on earth until Jesus returns to take it to himself."[139] The Basun family believed that every true believer was duty-bound to leave "human churches" in order to "preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."[140] Those who refused to answer the summons out of denominationalism were judged guilty by their association with loose-living professors of Christianity who were accepted, even respected, in "man-made churches."[141] In all sincerity the paper said its call to come out of Babel was not made to defame existing churches, but "to hold forth the Word of God."[142]

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[136] "The Unity of the Spirit," (another reference to the material cited in n. 133).

[137] Stay, "A Comparison," (another reference to the material cited in n. 129); Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 202.

[138] N.n., n.t., DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 4.

[139] "The Church in the Wilderness," (another reference to the material cited in n. 99); L[ars] Christoffersen, "Dangers, Temptations and Difficulties," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 4.

[140] "The Unity of the Spirit," (another reference to the material cited in n. 133).

The community's belief that it was an expression of the culmination of Christian history combined with the awful threat of divine judgment to lend considerable force to the paper's "come-outer" cry. Readers were warned of their responsibility before God. Failure to quit the precincts of Babylon equaled continued participation in the sin of division. No more powerful stimulus to come out of Babel could be invoked than the foreboding question, "Reader, will you become a participant in her sins and be cast into hell?"[143] Belief in the Lord's imminent return only added urgency to the question. The disgrace of leaving one's ancestral church was infinitely preferrable to being judged a disgrace to God at the Judgment which was coming soon.[144] Come-outism was a powerful and coercive influence on the group itself. Imminent judgment awaited outsiders and few within the St. Paul Park community were prepared to risk that threat. Schism was a very remote possibility; indeed the group displays a remarkable uniformity of thought, even to the same phraseology.[145] These people were firmly set in the conception of themselves as the Scandinavian speaking remnant of the true church which was being gathered together from the four corners of the earth at the last days of earth's history.

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[141] "An Interesting Question," (another reference to the material cited in n. 120); "Babylon is Fallen," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 2; "A Reformation," DEB, December 1, 1905, p. 1; "Questions," DEB, July 15, 1904, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 8.

[142] "Babylon is Fallen," (another reference to the material cited in n. 140).

[143] H. M. Riggle, "Revelation--the Seventeenth Chapter," DEB, December 15, 1907, p. 3.

[144] Holmen, "A Church," (another reference to material cited in n. 125).

A corollary of the come-outer spirit is the final point of consideration in Guds Menighed's ecclesiology, the idea of the true church's exclusivity. True believers served an exclusive Christ whose bride also was exclusive. According to the paper bigotry was not involved here; true saints did not speak bigotry, only truth.[146] Associations with bad company were expressly forbidden in the Bible and those commands were to be obeyed without exception. One who was truly "saved and sanctified" would not partake of the Lord's Supper with members of the denominational churches. Indeed, bad company was defined so as to include unscriptural churches. Their apparent willingness to fellowship men and women who still loved the world more than Christ was testimony to the fact that "Babylon" was not exclusive and hence not the true church. The denominational "Babel" could even be labeled heretical.[147]

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[145] The October 15, 1906 issue of Den Evangeliske Basun carried a notice from Nelson and S. O. Susag advising the group that L. Christoffersen of Norway Lake, Minnesota had been disfellowshipped for spreading "his false charges against this reformation and the Lord's witnesses, and his own doctrine at the same time." This is the only incident of excommunication which can be cited from the extant materials. Christoffersen occasionally contributed articles and testimonies to the paper, but he was not a major figure in the Basun family. Thomas Nelson and S. O. Susag, "Warning," DEB, October 15, 1906, p. 5.

[146] D. S. Warner, "An Exclusive Christ," DEB, February 1, 1907, p. 1.

The Doctrine of Divine Healing

The back page of Den Evangeliske Basun and Evangelii Trumpet carried columns devoted to the group's doctrine and experience of divine healing. This doctrine and its practice were directly connected with the group's ecclesiology. Doctrinal summaries list "healing" as one of the true church's cardinal emphases. Divine healing is "God's gospel" and "what the Bible teaches."[148] It is asserted throughout the four gospels just as clearly as the forgiveness of sin.[149] Faith healing was one of the New Testament church's distinguishing marks and the "faith once delivered to the saints" included the gift of divine healing. Moreover, "through all the ages" the miraculous healing of the sick by divine intervention had been the experience, practice and proclamation of those whom God had chosen for his service.[150] Den Evangeliske Basun drew what was for it the inescapable conclusion: "Now the church which has not apostles, prophets, teachers, gifts to heal, and all things which the church mentioned here [I Cor. 12:28] has cannot be the one Jesus built. The church which does not possess these gifts is imperfect; in reality it cannot properly be called the church, but sect is its proper name. The church which Jesus built had the gift of healing, and he placed nothing unnecessary in it."[151]

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[147] Chris Holte, "Heresy," DEB, July 1, 1906, p. 5; Renbeck, "The True and the False," (another reference to the material cited in n. 134).

[148] Micala Simonsen, "What the Bible Teaches," DEB, September 1, 1907, pp. 5-6; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Christ's and God's Gospel," DEB, January 1, 1906, p. 4.

[149] "Divine Healing," DEB, July 15, 1907, p. 8.

Guds Menighed taught a rather carefully wrought theology of healing that actually was grounded in their doctrine of the atonement. According to the Basun, humanity's fall in Adam had physical consequences for the human race as well as the familiar moral ones. The paper had a radical sense of human depravity since it argued that the ". . . entire [human] nature, both moral and physical, suffered under the fall . . . ."[152] The burden of humanity expiated by Jesus on the cross included both sin and illness. Basun writers interpreted quite literally Isaiah 53:3,4: the Savior was "a man full of sorrows and acquainted with sickness (sic) . . . Surely he has taken our illnesses upon him and borne our pain."[153] The incarnation's purpose was the destruction of Satan's work, among which were both sin and sickness; "Jesus has atoned for our illness and health is our rightful possession."[154] This word of promise belongs to the faithful because it is found in Scripture.[155]

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[150] Ibid.; "Divine Healing," DEB, June 1, 1906, p. 8.

[151] Ibid.

[152] H. M. Riggle, "Divine Healing is in the Atonement," DEB, December 1, 1906, p. 8; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Obedience to the Word of God," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 4.

Without question the Bible was the authority for Guds Menighed's message of divine healing. In validation of their teaching they pointed to numerous biblical passages.[156] In fact the magazine made a point of relying solely upon biblical authority for healing and not upon "testimonies of those who have been healed in these last days, neither on what is being published in many books."[157] Authoritative though they were not, the authors of some of those books were quoted by the paper, especially when they were representatives of the medical community admitting the limited, human knowledge of physicians.[158] The Basun contended that God had given the same New Testament power for healing to the latter-day church. But the present day church could only possess this gift under obedience to the word of Scripture. That word could be found in God's prescription for the healing of his people. James 5:14-15 was the locus classicus for Guds Menighed's doctrine and practice of divine healing:

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[153] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 245; Nelson used Mt. 8:13-17 as confirmation of Jesus' ability to take not only moral disease but also physical disease vicariously upon himself; Veien til Frelse, pp. 298-299.

[154] Nels Renbeck, "Our Possessions," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 8; see also: Nels Renbeck, "Divine Healing," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 8; Stay, "Healing of Our Bodies," (another reference to the material cited in n. 97).

[155] Ibid.

[156] The following illustrates the Basun's method of proving the doctrine of divine healing from the Bible:
1. A time for healing was prophesied (Isaiah 35:5-6).
2. The prophecies concerning divine healing are fulfilled (Mt. 8:16-17; Lk. 7:21). 3. Jesus had power to heal (Mt. 28:18; Acts 10:38). 4. Jesus used this power (Mt. 4:23, 24). 5. Jesus gave this power to the twelve (Mt. 10:1). 6. They used this power (Acts 5:12, 16).
7. Jesus gave this power to the Seventy (Lk. 10:9).
8. They used this power (Lk. 10:17). 9. Steven and Paul also had the power to heal. 10. The power to heal is a gift of the Spirit of God to the Church of God in the present time (I Cor. 22:9). 11. This power is given to us who believe (Jn. 14:12; Mk. 16:16-18). "Divine Healing is One of the Bible's Doctrines," DEB, September 1, 1906, p. 8.

> If anyone among you is sick, he should call the elders of the church and they should pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up . . . .[159]

Obedience to the biblical method of healing must be absolute. "If we use medicines God will not help us, for we must have no other God before him. But we must cast all this poison away from us; it cannot help us."[160]

In this moralistic theology of healing illness was the result of a general presence of sickness introduced into creation by the fall. "Had the race not fallen in sin then neither would sickness and death have entered the world."[161] But additional reasons were suggested to explain specific cases of illness. In a limited number of cases sickness might occur as divine punishment meted out to "hardened sinners." New Testament examples were cited as precedents.[162] Apart from divine judgment people might become ill for any one of three reasons: (1) through covetousness or negligence they transgress the laws of nature, (2) God might permit illness as a means of instruction and the furtherance of piety, and if either of these first two explanations cannot be made then (3) the sickness was Satan's direct work.[163] In the mind of the Basun community illness, directly or indirectly, was nearly always the consequence of some moral defect.

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[157] E. E. Byrum, "The Doctrine of Healing," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 8; "Divine Healing," (another reference to the material cited in n. 149).

[158] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 256-257.

[159] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 304.

[160] Caspar Holmen, "Divine Healing," DEB, April 15, 1906, p. 8.

A divine cure for illness was possible because of the group's moralistic explanation of illness. If fallen men and women could be saved from their sins then they might also be healed of the illnesses which were sin's result. God wanted to heal people as much as he desired their salvation.[164] During his earthly ministry Jesus repeatedly had demonstrated his compassion for the suffering. It was scarcely conceivable to the Basun family that his love and sympathy had concluded along with his earthly career. "He pities the sick and the suffering just as much as when he was himself in the body. He has never forgotten what he suffered when he took upon himself our sins and sicknesses, and he knows what we suffer when we groan under sin or illness."[165]

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[161] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 242-243; Riggle, "Healing in the Atonement," (another reference to the material cited in n. 151).

[162] J. C. Blaney, "Healing is a Part of the Gospel," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 8.

[163] "Divine Healing, DEB, February 1, 1904, p. 8.

[164] "It is God's will to heal souls just as much as

Jesus had promised his disciples the ability to work greater wonders than he himself had performed. This was made possible by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. "It is the Holy Spirit in us which can do the greater deeds."[166] Since Guds Menighed considered itself a portion of the latter-day restoration of the New Testament church, it had little difficulty understanding Jesus' promise to his disciples in such a way as to include the persons supporting Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. The only stipulation was the paper's willingness to preach the unvarnished truth of Scripture and seek the confirmation of that

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to save them, therefore we ought always to freely ask God for healing in the case of sickness. Jesus says if we ask for something according to God's will, he hears us. And it is always God's will to take away pains and heal; he has no pleasure in suffering men." Renbeck, "Divine Healing," (another reference to the material cited in n. 153).

[165] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, pp. 302-303.

[166] E. E. Byrum, "Christ Our Physician," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 8.

message in instances of miraculous healing.[167] Every ordained minister in the true church should be in such spiritual proximity to God that he or she could satisfy any afflicted saint's request for prayer and anointing.[168]

The Basun repeatedly insisted that the possibility of divine healing had not terminated with the close of the New Testament era.[169] An admission that healing had been the special gift of the early church was quite impossible. Guds Menighed's ecclesiology, and hence in great measure its sense of peoplehood, was built upon the strong sense of continuity with the New Testament church. If Guds Menighed measured up to the claim of all its literature, then the group was forced to defend all those ideas and practices it found in the life of the early church, including the practice of divine healing. The strength of the Basun's determination on this point of doctrine is measured by its willingness to argue that without divine healing as a present feature of the church ". . . the Bible is a dead letter for us."[170] While the logic of such an argument is questionable, it nonetheless illustrates the tenacity of Guds Menighed's belief in divine healing, and the strength of its sense of peoplehood.

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[167] "Divine Healing," DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 8.

[168] J. W. Byers, "The Power to Heal in the People of God," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 8.

[169] "Divine Healing," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 8; Nels Renbeck, "The Same Conditions Exist," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 1; D. O. Teasley, "Persuasion ot Sin," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 1.

[170] E. E. Byrum, "Is the Time for Divine Healing Past?," DEB, November 1, 1907, p. 8.

The St. Paul Park Scandinavians asserted the present possibility of divine healing and that the gift therefore ought to be sought. The "Biblical method to be healed" was to anoint the sufferer with olive oil, followed by the laying on of the elders' hands and the prayer of faith for healing. In cases where the person seeking health had committed a sin, forgiveness had to be sought first. Where an individual's health was not restored immediately following the prayer of faith, "then one continued to pray with earnest and perseverance until the Lord heard their prayer for the sick.[171] Elders could not always be available to preside at requests for healing services, therefore the saints were instructed that any form of message requesting prayer for healing could be sent to "anyone who has faith in God."[172] A curious extension of this belief was the practice whereby elders in one locale would anoint a handkerchief, pray over it, and then mail it to the afflicted saint who had requested intercession. The community believed that the sufferer would find healing by placing the anointed handkerchief on the diseased or injured part of the body. As with so many practices of Guds Menighed, this was done on the basis of biblical justification: the handkerchiefs taken from St. Paul's body which had miraculously healed the sick.[173]

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[171] "Divine Healing," DEB, April 1, 1905, p. 8; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 252; "What Ought to be Done in Case of Sickness," DEB, September 15, 1906, p. 8.

[172] "Divine Healing," DEB, July 15, 1904, p. 8.

The act of anointing was not invested with any magical property. The sine qua non of healing was not anointing but faith. Without faith in Christ's ability to answer prayer there was no reason to pray in the first place. In fact, one must not only believe that Christ can heal; "we must believe that he hears and will answer."[174] The faith necessary for healing was really no greater than the faith requisite for salvation. Nels Renbeck pointed out that healing did not depend upon a degree of faith greater than the severity of the believer's malady. For him faith was simply a matter of turning one's attention away from one's self and miseries to God, "the one who has created us and who has heaven and earth in his hands . . . ."[175]

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[173] Acts 19:12. Mrs. Sam Edwardsen mailed the following testimony to Den Evangeliske Basun: "I received from the saints in St. Paul Park an anointed handkerchief [and] I had the assurance that the Lord would make me healthy. I was very sick when the letter came. I had great pains in my head and believed God taught me to lay the anointed kerchief there. In Jesus' name I did so in the faith that God would heal me. It was not many seconds before I felt warm rays streaming through my body, and when I stood up, after having been on my knees in prayer to God for healing, all the pains were gone and the next day I did my housework, and now I work both outside and inside." "Divine Healing," DEB, October 15, 1907, p. 8.

[174] "Divine Healing," DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 8; "Divine Healing," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 8; "Divine Healing," DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 8; Editor [Thomas Nelson], "The Great Physician and His Power to Heal," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 8; Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, p. 42.

Not all those who prayed the prayer of faith were healed. Den Evangeliske Basun was compelled to address this reality. In the paper's view the prayer of faith could be rendered ineffective by the presence of any of four conditions: (1) the unwillingness to use recovered health in the service of the Lord, (2) unconfessed sin, (3) the belief that God is able and willing to heal but prevented by the end of the age of miracles, and (4) doubt.[176] The last of these possibilities was the great enemy of those who sought healing by faith. Doubt was the lack of faith and "the reason why there are not as many healings in our day as in the age of early Christianity."[177] In fact the reason why divine healings were absent from the denominational churches was the presence in those groups of persons who "do not believe one word of what they say about" Jesus the Great Physician.[178] Believers who trusted in God for healing would not compromise that belief by any act which employed another remedy. Two clear manifestations of doubt were the use of medicine and the consultation of a medical doctor. Between users of medicine and God there were "mountains of doubt. God will hide his face from you so he will not hear you."[179] Recourse to such means of recovery was avoided by true believers. The group resented the label "enthusiast" which was applied to them by others as a result of these two prohibitions; they did not see themselves as enthusiasts, but latter-day New Testament Christians obedient to all the Lord's commands and heirs to all his promises.

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[175] N[els] R[enbeck], "Have Faith in God," DEB November 15, 1906, p. 8; "Healed as a Result of Faith," DEB, February 1, 1906, p. 8.

[176] "Divine Healing," DEB, January 15, 1901, p. 8.

[177] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 252.

[178] "Divine Healing," DEB, September 1, 1906, p. 8.

The concluding element in this assessment of Guds Menighed's theology of healing is its keenly felt obligation to preserve the doctrine against all opposition. The group perceived Satan's determination to destroy the practice of divine healing, for physical illness was one of his favorite means of creating despair in the soul. Despite the routineness of divine healings in the true church, readers were warned not to become indifferent to their occurrences; the community was encouraged to read all available testimonies as a means of stimulating continuous support for the doctrine.[180] But certainly the most significant reason for preserving the practice of divine healing was Guds Menighed's belief that such healings were signs confirming the validity of their general message. Instances of miraculous healing were interpreted as God's stamp of approval on the community and its many enterprises.[181]

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[179] N.n., n.t., DEB, December 1, 1905, p. 4.

[180] Nels Renbeck, "Watchfulness," DEB, March 1, 1907, p. 4; "The Gospel of Healing," DEB, July 15, 1907, p. 7.

[181] C. W. Howard, "Raise the Banner, Is. 62:10," DEB, September 1, 1904, p. 6.

Numerous testimonies of healing were published in Den Evangeliske Basun. A sampling of the maladies from which people claimed relief through divine agency rapidly grows into a substantial list.[182] The question is really not whether these people were healed in the manner, and even to the degree, they stated. In this case the perception of reality is more important to the group's sense of identity than "what really happened." The perception of those who claimed healing was that God had indeed miraculously healed them. This perception was clearly within their field of reality. Disputing the genuineness of their testimony would have been, and certainly was, quite useless. According to their experience God had healed them, and what could be of greater moment to pietistically inclined Christians than experiential knowledge? These reported incidents of healing served as proof to the community, and from their point of view to anyone with the ability to see God's hand in history, that it was indeed who and what it claimed for itself.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century America neither Guds Menighed nor the English language Church of God were alone in their assertions of the possibility of the "faith cure." Raymond Cunningham identifies several other teachers of divine healing, and his interpretation of the phenomenon of faith healers cannot be denied.[183] But in the case of Guds Menighed the doctrine of divine healing was more than an outgrowth of perfectionism. In the St. Paul Park group the prayer of faith was a corollary of its ecclesiology. Still, the community must be seen against an amorphous background of groups and individuals who shared a common antipathy for physicians and patent medicines.[184] Undoubtedly the most celebrated member of this group was Mary Baker Eddy. The Basun recognized the possibility of its confusion with the Christian Scientists, as well as other faith healers, and proceeded to detail the differences for its readers. Some of these are cited above, but the Basun also identified a practice among Mrs. Eddy's followers which was out of keeping with New Testament healing: Christian Science practitioners took money for their services.[185] For the St. Paul Park Scandinavians divine healing was not so much a matter of opposition to doctors and medicine as it was a privilege of the true church. For Guds Menighed the issue of divine healing was summed up in their affirmation that Jesus was the best of all physicians, "indeed greater than all earthly healers together. But the best of all is that he is the same in our time as when he walked here on the earth."[186]

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[182] Following is a partial list of the ailments from which writers to the Basun claimed to be healed: morphine addiction, blindness, "lung-fever," pain in the back, "lung-sickness," blood-poisoning, whooping-cough, tumors, "itch," scarlet fever, and convulsions.

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[183] Raymond J. Cunningham, "From Holiness to Healing: The Faith Cure in America, 1872-1892," Church History, vol. 43 (December, 1974): pp. 499-513.

[184] John F. Teahan, "Warren Felt Evans and Mental Healing: Romantic Idealism and Practical Mysticism in Nineteenth Century America," Church History, 48 (March, 1979): pp. 63-80. Thomas Nelson indicates his awareness of this background in his 1907 book, Home, Health and Success (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Co., 1907), where he writes, "Some make the sad mistake of confounding Scriptural healing with that practised by Christian Scientists, spiritualists, hypnotists, and many other sects of our day. This is not the case. To be healed by faith in the promises of God is far different from taking the treatment offered by these false healers. The fact is that the cures claimed to be affected by them either are only fakes and humbugs practised on the people for money or for some other selfish purpose or else are performed by Satanic power, like the witchcraft practised and believed in by superstitious people of the past." p. 500-501.

The inner life of Guds Menighed expressed by the three doctrinal emphases treated above might be described as pietistic, free church, restorationist, and Wesleyan and self-consciously distinguished from Lutheranism. An examination of the teachings of the St. Paul Park community reveals a deliberate severance from the Lutheran doctrine of nature and grace. While this departure might fairly be labeled Wesleyan, one should do so only in the recognition of Guds Menighed's resistance to classification according to proper names. In their eyes the only appropriate description of doctrine was the appellation "scriptural."

Guds Menighed's doctrine of divine healing expressed the firmly held conviction that it was a portion of the restored New Testament church. The presence of such teaching was in itself a mark of the true church. Incidents of miraculous healing demonstrated to the community that its claim was indeed true. Its existence was thereby validated and simultaneously given universal significance.

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[185] "Divine Healing," DEB, August 1, 1904, p. 8.

[186] "Divine Healing," DEB, October 1, 1906, p. 8.

Finally, the St. Paul Park community's ecclesiology was nonconformist in its pietistic insistence upon experiential salvation and consequent rejection of much of what it considered the humanly devised apparatus of religion. Guds Menighed's inner life was pietistic without any evidence of an appeal to European pietistic roots. No names of Scandinavian pietists appear in the extant literature published by Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. Creeds, seminaries, church bureaucracy and canon law are only a sample of the elements of mainstream Christianity studiously avoided by the Basun family. Such rejection did not lead to anarchy. The community was organized and operated on the principle that the Holy Spirit gifted certain individuals for leadership roles. That naturally endowed or aggressive personalities might also rise to prominent positions was a consideration to which the community did not speak.

The doctrine of Guds Menighed might be said therefore to have further shaped and solidified the identity described in the previous chapter. The group's teaching was the expression of a self-consciously distinctive ethnoreligious community. Guds Menighed possessed more than its own history, self-definition and ethic. It also possessed a unique body of doctrine which served further to distinguish the group from its competitors while it also expressed and offered confirmation of the inner life of the community itself.

CHAPTER IV

PIETY

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Guds Menighed never withdrew its claim to be above denominational division. The true church was incapable of division and therefore wherever that true church existed, by definition, no schism was possible. But the presence of an identifiable piety in the practice of Guds Menighed mitigates their assertion of non-sectarian purity. Features of that piety further illustrate one of the basic findings of this study, that the immigrants associated with Guds Menighed broke radically with their inherited Lutheranism.

One might say the presence of a piety distinguishable from Lutheran ritual even underscores the Basun community's departure from the traditions of its homelands. As stated in the previous chapter, doctrine may indeed express a community's inner life of faith, hope and love. But the construction and teaching of doctrine is essentially a cognitive enterprise. A proper theological vocabulary may be learned in the absence of a deep emotional commitment to the church or community responsible for instruction. Doctrinal rectitude is no certain guarantee of community loyalty or solidarity. Piety, however, touches lives in the affective domain. Worship is conducted according to patterns or rituals to which persons attach considerable feeling. Certain prayers or hymns, even the pattern of worship itself, acquire special status among the members of a religious community. The familiarity of elements of religious ritual evoke and reinforce an emotional commitment to the group.

Among people whose lives already have been thrown into turmoil by immigration, one might reasonably expect to discover a tenacious retention of familiar piety. Studies demonstrate that religious terminology, as well as words and phrases of family endearment, are the last to disappear from the native vocabulary of an immigrant American.[1] Forsaking the articles of Luther's _Small Catechism_ memorized in childhood is one thing; giving up the emotional support of a familiar structure of piety was something quite different and finally of greater significance for the Scandinavians who left the Lutheran church for _Guds Menighed_. If it is true that forsaking one distinctive piety for another was a more difficult task than exchanging sets of doctrine, then an examination of Guds Menighed's piety will reveal in a manner more significant than the study of doctrines alone the degree of their determination to remain loyal to their new community of faith, and of their rejection of the religion of their homelands.

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[1] "It is by slow, incessant attrition that each foreigner has been turned into an American, idea by idea, and word by word . . . . Each language has been forced to adapt itself to new conditions, and thereby gives us a vivid picture of the immigrant's struggle for a position within the new nation and his gradual accommodation to its demands. . . .

"Home and church were the social institutions which the immigrant brought with him, just as surely as the parts of his body and the stirrings of his mind, and his language reflects the extent to which he maintained them intact against the inroads of American influence." Einar Haugen, "Language and Immigration," _Norwegian-American Studies and Records_, vol. X, (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1938), pp. 2-27, _passim_.

The Church of God and Guds Menighed were firmly set in a free church tradition of congregationalist polity. They strongly opposed religious custom and formal liturgies as human invention. Their disdain for "formalism" has been described above. But to say Guds Menighed attacked "formalism" is not to say the community possessed no piety of its own. Because the Basun community did not structure its life according to the prescriptions of a church calendar (and many of the Christian festivals are noticeably absent from the attention of the paper and its readers) it does not follow that no structures or religious celebrations can be located within the piety of Guds Menighed. In point of fact, community life was structured around two annual events, campmeeting (leirmøde or kampmøde), which gathered in several regional locations from Washington to Wisconsin as well as the central campmeeting in St. Paul Park, and the winter assembly-meeting (forsamlingsmøde), smaller meetings convened across the northern tier of states from Tacoma, Washington to Boston, Massachusetts.

In an analysis of the life of Guds Menighed piety must be understood in two senses. One may speak of piety in the sense of religious ritual, including such elements as worship patterns, celebration of ordinances, prayer and hymnody. The people of *Guds Menighed* undoubtedly would have been shocked at the identification of their worship patterns and usages as "ritual," which was a feature of the denominations they abhorred. Nonetheless the term is appropriate here. Beyond this rather customary understanding of piety as ritual one must also consider the piety of *Guds Menighed* as ethics. The *Basun* community was deeply convinced that Christianity was more than a matter of sound doctrine; the pattern of an individual's life must reflect the presence of Christ; all life was a sanctuary. For this reason a consideration of *Guds Menighed's* piety must include ethics as well as religious ritual.

Campmeeting Revivalism

Evangelist Sven O. Susag reported in the *Basun* the great spiritual fervor of the 1904 Grand Forks, North Dakota campmeeting. First held in 1896 and the oldest of the campmeetings in the Dakotas and Minnesota, the Grand Forks meeting brought together three ethnic groups by featuring preaching in the English, German and Scandinavian languages. Susag was pleased that the number of Scandinavians in attendance had doubled over the previous year, and he also proudly reported a total of $320.50 in pledges (to be paid by the fall) for *Den Evangeliske Basun*, thirty baptisms and eighty participants in the communion and foot-washing service. Beyond a mere statistical account of the meeting, Susag's report breathes the spirit of Guds Menighed's piety and therefore offers a convenient starting point for this discussion.

> The Lord was present and confirmed the Word from beginning to end, and I must say that a more blessed meeting I have never attended, particularly in the last days, when time after time jubilation was heard from the great meeting as the Lord [ ] his Spirit over us. God annointed his witnesses with the oil of joy until the cup overflowed, but nothing was spilled, for sinners came and gave their hearts to God one after the other.
>
> The last Sunday evening was especially a jubilation feast which can never be forgotten. Cries of jubilee and tears of joy were mingled in humble thanks to the living God for his goodness to the children of men, and for his powerful presence in the meeting to save, sanctify, heal, and also to edify his church.[2]

Susag's description leads to the conclusion that the ritual aspect of the piety of the Basun community was formed by the spirit and enthusiasm of campmeeting revivalism. His words and phrases--jubilation, the salvation of sinners, jubilation feast--and the reports of conversions, sanctifications and healings are reminiscent of the American frontier campmeeting and revivalistic Christianity.[3] The atmosphere connoted by Susag's report *Basun* readers appreciated as indicative of worship conducted in the proper manner, i.e., "in Spirit and in Truth." Both these elements were crucial to true worship: enthusiasm occurred in the absence of the latter and formalism without the former. "God's Word is truth, therefore to worship him in truth is to worship him in agreement with the Word of God led by the Spirit of God, which is one with God's Word."[4] Jubilation was a natural consequence of true worship, for in this style of piety worship was a celebration of the entry of the believers' names in the "Book of Life." The fact that names were inscribed in "church-books" could never evoke jubilee cries like those which spontaneously broke forth whenever a sinner came to salvation.[5]

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[2] S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 15, 1904, p. 6.

[3] See Jay Dolan, Catholic Revivalism: The American Experience, 1830-1900, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), pp. 57-112, passim; Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Campmeeting: Religion's Harvest Time, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955); William G. McGloughlin, Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham, (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1959); and Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact upon Religion in America, (Boston: Little,Brown and Co., 1958).

The *Basun* defended the community's piety by lashing out at revivalism's critics and insisting that revivalistic conversions were the only means of securing the forgiveness of sin. Critics of revivalism were labeled "Bible-deniers," if not "atheists" or "free-thinkers." Revivals were compared to the "meeting which was held by the Lord's disciples on the first Pentecost after Christ's ascension . . ."[6]

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[4] Nels Renbeck, "The Old and the New Testament," *DEB*, March 1, 1904, p. 5; n.n., n.t., *DEB*, August 15, 1905, p. 4.

[5] "The Fruits of the Spirit--Joy," *DEB*, October 15, 1904, p. 2.

[6] "Another Bible-Denier," *DEB*, January 15, 1905, p. 4; "They Deny the Bible," *DEB*, January 1, 1905, p. 8; "More Bible-Deniers," *DEB*, June 1, 1905, p. 5.

Anyone who did not desire a second outbreak of Pentecostal power practiced a suspect brand of Christianity. In his memoirs Susag relates a conversation between himself and some North Dakota farmers who had discontinued attending a local revival in which Susag had claimed that ministers could not give absolution for sins. Susag insisted that pastoral forgiveness could extend no further than wrongs done to the pastor himself; no such practice as absolution was legitimate. Forgiveness for sin came from God at the revival altar.[7]

Campmeeting was the highlight of the year for the Basun community. But because farmers composed a major segment of the group's constituency, a single, centrally located meeting was thought to be impossible. In 1904 the Basun staff suggested the abandonment of local campmeetings in favor of one large meeting on the publishing company property in St. Paul Park. Economy was put forth as a principal reason. A single meeting at a location close to a transportation center could be financed more easily than several held in remote locales. A central meeting also would likely attract a sufficient number of rail travelers to qualify for special group fares. The preachers' time also could thereby be used more economically. A major campmeeting in one location meant the preachers could devote more time to the evangelization of new territory. Before the first St. Paul Park meeting in 1903, Susag and Thomas Nelson already believed the "Common Campmeeting" should be held there immediately following the conclusion of the Church of God campmeeting in Moundsville, West Virginia, the site of the English language publishing house. Nelson and Susag's proposal met with enough protest to force the cancellation of their plans. Regional meetings would continue a while longer and the St. Paul Park meeting would convene during the first week of September, concurrent with the Minnesota State Fair. This was neither coincidence nor an effort to provide a diversion for campmeeting attendees saturated with religion. During the fair's run railroads sold fares to St. Paul at half the normal cost. "This gives those who visit the meeting opportunity again to travel at half-price."[8]

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[7] S. O. Susag, Personal Reminiscences, pp. 180-181.

Regional campmeetings were held in locations such as Stowell, Wisconsin; Arlington, South Dakota; Hawick, Minnesota; and Elma, Washington. Customarily some saint who had come out into the "evening light" would offer a farm or tract of land as the meeting site. Services were conducted nightly with as many as three on Sunday. Since the Basun community excluded no person on the grounds of nationality, and because its leading preachers were bilingual, preaching almost always was conducted in the English language as well as Norwegian and Swedish. Where a sizeable group of another ethnic minority might be expected to attend, efforts were made to secure preachers of that minority or others fluent in the group's language, as in the case of the Germans living around Grand Forks. Whether or not they had the means to support themselves during the meeting, all persons were invited, a fact which on at least once occasion prompted neighboring farmers to lock their chicken coops.[9] Basun readers were particularly encouraged not to be intimidated by language differences. Susag testified to the miraculous ability of his American listeners to comprehend his Norwegian sermons,[10] and Olai Christoffersen wrote that the Lord had blessed him at English language meetings even when he had not understood much of the preaching.[11]

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[8] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "Campmeeting at St. Paul Park," DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 4; Thomas Nelson and S. O. Susag, "Common Campmeeting," DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 5.

In addition to the proclamation of a "full and entire gospel," by which the community meant the experiences of regeneration, sanctification and divine healing, campmeeting attendees might witness baptisms and ordinations. They were certain to hear appeals for the financial support of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. Occasionally meetings were interrupted by rival religious groups or local citizens outraged by the strange doctrines preached by the campmeeting speakers. Typically the meeting concluded with a service of communion and footwashing.[12]

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[9] Susag, Reminiscences, pp. 46-47; "Campmeeting," DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 5; Peder Pederson, "From the Workfield," DEB, August 15, 1906, p. 5; "Campmeetings," DEB, May 1, 1905, p. 7; "Announcements," DEB, May ~~15~~, 1905, p. 7.

[10] Susag, Reminiscences, p. 62.

[11] Olai Christoffersen, "Get Ready for the Campmeeting in St. Paul Park," DEB, May 15, 1905, p. 4.

The most significant of the campmeetings was held at St. Paul Park. To it came travelers from Iowa, Wisconsin, the Dakotas and, in 1904, as far as Washington. Specific instructions were printed in the Basun for railroad passengers instructing them in the procedures of transferring at Union Depot in St. Paul for the fifteen mile ride down the Mississippi River valley to St. Paul Park. As many as eight men and women preachers held forth during the five daily English and Scandinavian services during the ten day meeting.[13] Other than the multiplication of worship services the St. Paul Park campmeeting followed the same routine as the others. Since the Basun family acted as managers of the meeting, appeals for the donations which were the principal support of the publishing work were particularly strenuous. Worshippers could expect to be told that the paper was "the only manner by which we can reach Zion's captives who are in Babel and the world."[14] Such an appeal raised $310.00 in gifts and pledges at the 1904 meeting.[15]

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[12] Editor [Thomas Nelson], "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1905, p. 6; Mrs. M. C. Helgesen, a letter from Colfax, Wisconsin in "Testimonies," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 5; Thomas Nelson, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 5; Emil Kreutz, "From the Workfield," DEB, August 1, 1905, p. 6; S. O. and Martha Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, August 1, 1906, p. 5; "Campmeeting," DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 4.

[13] Thomas Nelson, "From the Workfield," DEB, September 15, 1904, p. 5; Mrs. M. C. Helgesen, "Joy in the Holy Spirit," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 7.

Campmeetings were annual events at St. Paul Park from 1903 to 1916. Their growth was rapid enough to make them an institution in the life of Guds Menighed. In 1905 the Basun repeated its desire to make this the common campmeeting for the Northwest. Reduced train fares once again bulk large as a rationale and a year later the Basun's campmeeting announcement carried word that return fares from St. Paul could indeed be purchased at one-third the usual cost if a total of one hundred fares were purchased. The list of states in which the special offer applied indicates the growing sphere of Basun influence as well as the growing importance of the St. Paul Park meeting: Minnesota, Wisconsin, South and North Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois. In 1907 the meeting was attended by guests from each of these states, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Washington "and many more states which we cannot now remember, indeed even Norway was represented."[16] Determining the actual numbers of persons in attendance is difficult. Campmeeting reports are sporadic and inconsistent in their content. Usually they list baptisms (as few as 10, as many as 19), and the number of participants in what was called the "ordinance service" (as few as 50, as many as 100). For reasons which will be discussed below it can be safely estimated that more people attended campmeeting than participated in the special observance of footwashing. An undated photograph of a St. Paul Park campmeeting contains approximately 135 persons, so an estimated average attendance of 125-150 seems justified.[17]

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[14] Nelson, "Workfield," (another reference to the material cited in n. 13).

[15] Ibid.

[16] "The Campmeeting in St. Paul Park," DEB, July 15, 1907, pp. 4-5; "Campmeetings," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 7; Susag and Susag, "Workfield," (another reference to the material cited in n. 12); n.n., n.t., DEB, May 15, 1906, p. 7; S. O. Susag, "Common Campmeeting in St. Paul Park," DEB, February 15, 1905, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, June 1, 1905, p. 4; Editor [Nelson], "Workfield," (another reference to the material cited in n. 12); "Campmeeting," DEB, April 1, 1905, p. 7.

People traveled to campmeeting from distant places to enjoy the fellowship of like-minded individuals, hear "straight preaching" from the Word of God and participate with their brothers and sisters in the ordinances of communion and footwashing. Basun subscribers were scattered about in distant places. Where regular worship did occur only a tiny flock could be gathered.[18] For folk accustomed

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[17] The photograph may be found in Anna Emilie Koglin, History of the Church of God in Minnesota, p. 67.

[18] "Not a single saint is here which I know of apart from me. But I have had opportunity to speak to some here about the truth; and there is in any case one here who is fed up with the sects and wishes something better . . . .

"Louriston, Minn. is also a place where I do not believe any of God's preachers have been. I have two sisters who have just arrived from Norway and one brother who live there. It is my wish that the Lord might send some of his own there who could preach the truth for them, so the ones who slumber could wake up from sleep." Mrs. Chris Pearson, a letter from Goldendale, Washington, in "Testimonies," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 6; similar feelings are expressed by Basun testimony writers H. B. Haftorson, a letter from Melvin, Minnesota in "Testimonies," DEB, to religious isolation and separation from one another, campmeeting fulfilled an important social function not unlike early nineteenth century campmeetings in the Ohio valley. The Scandinavians of Guds Menighed were buoyed up by the companionship available in a week or ten days of religious meetings.

While socializing may have been the motive of some, the principal reason people were invited to campmeeting was religious. Spiritually hungry hearts were urged to come seeking the fulfillment of salvation, sanctification or healing. Much campmeeting sermonizing was aimed at securing the conversion experience central to revivalism. Instantaneous conversions were deliberately sought because ". . . no one may believe that he is saved except that he knows the time when it happened."[19] To encourage people to make the decision which would lead to such certain knowledge of salvation the familiar language of the revival sermon was employed:

> O dear friend, ought you continue longer on sin's broad way and trample Jesus' precious blood under your feet? Do you wonder that you hear so many warnings about repentance and seeking Jesus as your personal Savior? What will you answer on the Day of Judgment, what sorts of excuses will you then put forth? Do not let the Devil blind you any longer so that you spend not an instant longer in the Devil's costly service, because the only

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February 1, 1905, p. 5; and Mrs. H. D. Hansen, a letter from Valley, Minnesota, in "Testimonies," DEB, September 15, 1904, p. 5.

[19] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Lord's Salvation," DEB, February 15, 1906, p. 8.

> time you have promise of is this moment. The next step could be into eternity. Therefore, "seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon him in the hour that He is near."
>
> Here we see that there is the greatest necessity to seek the Lord in the time he may be found and the hour that He is near. O dear unsaved soul, here we see that He shall not always be found. O, do not push away the gentle voice of His Spirit when salvation is offered to you freely and for nothing just now in this hour. 'For every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'[20]

Worshippers at campmeeting were likely to witness a baptismal service. The Basun community understood baptism, the Lord's Supper and footwashing as ordinances rather than sacraments. In no sense were they considered to confer grace upon the worshipper. While participants anticipated a spiritual blessing in the ordinances, it was understood as the blessing that comes from obedience rather than an occasion of spiritual exaltation. Participation in the ordinances was very important to Guds Menighed, but not in virtue of a saving power communicated through them. Rather, participation in the ordinances was an external sign of an internal grace.[21] Although this definition applied to some churches' conception of sacrament, Guds Menighed never referred to these three rites by that term. These three rites were followed instead as commandments of the Lord, ordained by his Word and his own participation in them. True believers would be obedient followers of their

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[20] Mrs. Edw. Evensen, a letter from Willmar, Minnesota in "Testimonies," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 5.

[21] E. E. Byrum, "The Ordinances of the Bible," DEB, July 15, 1907, p. 3; and August 1, 1907, pp. 2-3.

Lord's example and precept.

Baptism was restricted to persons who had passed through the conversion experience. The baptism of infants was considered unbiblical, a corruption introduced into the church by the Catholic apostacy. New Testament converts to Christianity had been "nearly always" baptized shortly after their conversions and the Basun community could find no satisfactory reason warranting a departure from that practice.[22] Instead they practiced baptism as an ordinance for believers only. Nelson stated the issue clearly enough, and in a manner which suggests he knew the transformation this element of piety demanded of Scandinavian readers:

> There is the word which must be preached and the word which must be heard (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38, 41; Joh. 4:1; Rom. 10:17), and the word which must be believed; and faith comes by hearing the preaching of the word. Therefore a new infant cannot believe. It is not easy to lay aside an old habit, and I know very well that it is no light matter for many of my readers to let themselves be persuaded that infant baptism is unbiblical. All I can do is ask each one to search the New Testament for themselves . . . .
>
> I respect every upright man, even if he has unbiblical opinions. But still more do I respect God in heaven, and therefore must I keep myself to His unfailing and perfect word in this.[23]

Guds Menighed was so adamant about the practice of believers' baptism that it demanded a second submission to the rite by converts who had been baptized as children "by sprinkling, pouring or some other unbiblical method."[24] Apostates who had been baptized only to fall away into sin also needed to be re-baptized. For this reason occasionally Basun workers were accused of heresy by the very Lutherans they sought to evangelize. Anna E. Koglin, author of History of the Church of God in Minnesota, describes an interview, arising out of her work as a sixteen year old Basun colporteur, with a Norwegian farmer in northwestern Minnesota. The farmer asked whether Koglin had been baptized as a child. Her parents had been Lutherans so she explained that she had indeed been baptized as an infant, but that she and her parents had undergone a second baptism after their conversions and entrance into the church of God. Evidently a staunch Lutheran, the farmer sent Koglin away with the cry, "Heretic!," ringing in her ears.[25]

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[22] Ibid.; E. E. Byrum, "The Ordinances of the Bible," DEB, September 1, 1907, p. 2.

[23] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 265-266.

The Basun community also insisted that the rite of baptism be administered as a single immersion. Since neither sprinkling, pouring or trine immersion could be demonstrated from the Bible the Basun considered them invalid forms. Immersions could be performed in any season, even the bitter-cold upper Midwest winter. Thomas Nelson claimed to have witnessed baptisms where a hole needed to be cut through ice a foot thick. People need not fear illness in such circumstances, said Nelson, for he had never seen a person "become sick or suffer the least damage by being baptized according to the Lord's Word."[26] The Christian rite of baptism was thus reserved for those who had made an intentional decision of faith. Such believers were immersed, regardless of the season of the year and without benefit of indoor baptistries, once, and in a "face up position."[27]

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[24] Byrum, "Ordinances," (another reference to the material cited in n. 22).

[25] Koglin, Church of God in Minnesota, p. 71.

Near the end of campmeeting worshippers attended what was commonly termed the "ordinance service," where communion was celebrated and the saints participated in the washing of each other's feet. Guds Menighed practiced a form of open communion: "Each one whose sins are forgiven and who walks in the light of God's Word and discerns the body of the Lord can participate in this ordinance."[28] But it was understood that only believers would receive communion. Members of Guds Menighed refused communion rather than participate with fellow communicants judged to be unconverted, ". . . for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?"[29] In respect of the communion celebrated at campmeeting the qualification probably was a moot point; most campmeeting worshippers were converted and already met it; those who did not were not likely in attendance anyway.

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[26] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 277; J. C. Blaney, "Baptism," DEB, June 15, 1906, p. 3.

[27] J. C. Blaney, "Baptism," DEB, September 15, 1906, p. 5; face up because baptism was a sign of burial with Christ and people were buried facing upward.

[28] E. E. Byrum, "The Ordinances of the Bible," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 2.

[29] Sam Edvarson, a letter from Battle Lake, Minnesota in "Testimonies," DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 5.

Campmeeting communicants, by their participation in the Lord's Supper, commemorated the Lord's death. In his Vaesentlige Bibel Emner Nelson explained the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, and then advocated Zwingli's symbolic understanding of the Lord's Supper.[30] Unfermented grape juice and a single loaf of bread were favored over the use of prepared fragments, for the community attached an ecclesiological interpretation to the rite of communion: ". . . the bread in its wholeness refers to the church, while in its broken condition, such as it is distributed to the saints, the members of Christ's body, it refers to Christ's death on the cross."[31] Special hymns following this interpretation were composed for use in the communion service. C. T. Langeson wrote the lyrics to "Jesu Ihukommelse" [Remember Jesus], which said in part:

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[30] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 279. In response to a question about the sense in which Christ's flesh and blood may be understood in connection with the Lord's Supper the Basun said, "When Jesus says of the Lord's Supper: 'This is my body . . . This is my blood,' we must not therefore understand that it was his real body, but it must be understood in a figurative manner." "Questions," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 4.

[31] "Therefore the Apostolic church did not use many small loaves of bread, so that each received a small bread of his own. But they used a whole loaf, which was broken and distributed to the church." Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 283. "The practice among many religious denominations of using for communion purposes wine containing alcohol should also be condemned. Reformed drunkards have been known to get their final downfall from this source. There can be no doubt that the wine used by Jesus and his disciples was the unfermented juice of the grape, and none other should be used by people professing to be followers of Christ." Thomas Nelson, Home, Health and Success, (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Publishing Company, 1907), p. 454.

> One bread, one body we,
> His church and bride so dear
> United in mind and spirit,
> With love's almighty bond.[32]

Commemorated in connection with the Lord's Supper was the ordinance of footwashing, participation in which was considered an especially great blessing. However this esteem may not have been shared universally throughout the community. Defenses of the practice appeared in the Basun more frequently than discussions of other elements of Guds Menighed's piety. Was this due to deep-seated misgivings of people among whom the practice of footwashing was quite foreign? The question cannot be answered with any certitude, but the reiterated defenses of footwashing seem to indicate some level of resistance to its practice.[33] And thus it seems appropriate to estimate campmeeting attendance at higher figures than those reported for footwashing participants.

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[32] C. T. Langeson, "Remember Jesus," in C. T. Langeson and Thomas Nelson, eds., Den Evangeliske Sanger [The Gospel Singer], (Chicago: R. Egebergh, 1899), pp. 103-4. This song was followed in the hymnal by another set of lyrics for the same tune, "Vi har Adlydt Hans Ord," [We Have Obeyed His Word], which was sung after the observance of communion.

[33] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 5; "Questions," DEB, March 1, 1905, p. 5; "Questions," DEB, December 1, 1905, pp. 4ff; E. Schrock, "Footwashing," DEB, December 1, 1906, p. 6.

For the ordinance of footwashing men withdrew to one area and women to another in order to preserve modesty. In obedience to Jesus' command in John 13 and as an expression of Christian humility individuals took turns ritually washing each other's feet. This act of piety substituted for a doctrinal test of fellowship, for "it should be next to impossible for worldly and proud professors to bow themselves down and wash their brothers' feet, for the act requires more humility than they possess."[34] The practice of footwashing was "a picture which displays the humility and servanthood of love which Jesus would have in His church here on earth."[35]

The ordinances practiced in campmeeting worship and in other settings were regarded as the "church-rules" of the church of God, "written in the New Testament and practiced by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his Apostles and by the surviving people."[36] Other duties were enjoined upon Guds

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[34] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 293.

[35] "Questions," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 5; "Now if I as God and Master / Washed your feet, / You are also responsible / To wash each other's feet. / The Lord's law is not heavy / But a delight for those who believe. / We serve Him in humility / While we are here on earth." Mrs. H. A. Hendricks, "Jesus Our Example," DEB, August 15, 1905, p. 1; Thomas Nelson wrote the lyrics for a hymn to be used in conjunction with the footwashing service, "Et Eksempel" [An Example], Thomas Nelson and D. O. Teasley, eds., Zions Seiers Sange [Songs of Zion's Victory], (St. Paul Park: Evangeli Basun Publishing Company, 1906), p. 128.

[36] Byrum, "Ordinances," (another reference to the material cited in n. 21).

Menighed as matters of piety: the "holy kiss," prayer, fasting and "the raising of holy hands." But baptism, communion and footwashing were obligations for all true believers.[37]

Smaller versions of campmeetings called assembly-meetings were held in several locales during the months of November, December and January. Their purpose was much the same as campmeeting: ". . . that God's children may be confirmed and strengthened, sinners re-born, the sick healed, and that God's purpose might be carried out in all cases."[38] Assembly meetings were held in a greater number of settings than were campmeetings: smaller towns like Norway Lake and Kerkhoven, Minnesota; distant communities where only a handful of saints could be gathered, as in Hoboken, New Jersey; as well as towns that served as locations for the summer campmeetings.[39] In addition to the preaching of experienced evangelists, assembly-meetings also afforded opportunities for novices to develop their spiritual gifts. On the job training was the Basun community's method of ministerial education. In fact, the Basun workers' home served as a training center for evangelists and missionaries.[40]

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[37] Byrum, "Ordinances," (another reference to the material cited in n. 21).

[38] E., "Our Assembly-Meeting," DEB, December 15, 1904, p. 3.

[39] N.n., n.t., DEB, November 1, 1905, p. 7; S. O. Susag, "Assembly-Meeting," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 4; Charles M. Grant, "From the Workfield," DEB, February 15, 1904, p. 4; "Assembly-Meeting," DEB, November 15, 1907, p. 7; n.n., n.t., DEB, October 15, 1904, pp. 6-7.

In the intervening months between summer and winter meetings worship was conducted primarily in family units. This pattern was broken only by the arrival of an itinerant preacher or colporteur. Songs were composed especially for "house worship,"[41] which was encouraged as a daily practice. The father gathered the family and servants, "if they are found in the home,"[42] for prayer, Bible reading and singing. No ritual was prescribed; worship was to develop "as the Spirit of the Lord leads."[43] Children were a particular object of concern in family worship. By their third birthday they were considered mature enough to hear small segments of Scripture read and explained. As they grew older they needed the preaching of conversion. Parents were the persons best suited to this spiritual task if their lives were circumspect and worthy of their children's confidence.[44] Indeed, part of the father's duty was the development of the "spiritual faculties" of his children.[45] In the piety of Guds Menighed the family was a miniature congregation over which the parents presided. Even the house substituted for a church building. Instead of "expensive paintings" and other extravagant adornment, homes were recommended to be furnished with religious mottoes and "good religious books," presumably those published or distributed by Evangeli Basun Publishing Company.[46]

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[40] N. Renbeck, "From the Workfield," DEB, December 15, 1904, p. 5.

[41] e.g., "Aften Lovsang" [Evening Hymn] in Den Evangeliske Sange, p. 123.

[42] Nels Renbeck, "Childrearing," DEB, February 1, 1907, p. 7.

[43] Ibid.

[44] "The Family's Altar," DEB, August 15, 1904, p. 6.

[45] "A Father's Duty," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 7.

The routine of house worship was occasionally interrupted by visits of itinerant preachers, Basun workers and colporteurs. These sometimes colorful people toured a remarkably wide area of the United States conducting revival meetings or worship services in conjunction with their visits in the homes of Basun subscribers. The itinerants burned with the desire to "see souls saved."[47] During one eleven-month period the most widely traveled of the itinerants, Sven Susag, claimed to have delivered 272 sermons, made 178 pastoral calls and traveled more than 15,000 miles.[48]

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[46] P. F. Robb, "Parents Duties to Their Children," DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 3. A page of each issue of Den Evangeliske Basun usually was devoted to advertisements of the books and tracts distributed by the company. A partial list of the titles available suggests some interesting subjects: (the following were advertised in Norwegian) The Millenium in the Light of the Word of God, Prepare to Meet Your God, Must We Sin?, Which Church Should I Join?, Reasons to Leave the Sects, (the following were advertised as "Engelske Bøger") Christian Conduct, Is the Negro a Beast?, Tobacco and Its Effects, Behind the Prison Bars, The Ordinances of the New Testament, DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 7. Guds Menighed disapproved of "light reading" (novels and short stories), not because it was particularly harmful but for the simple reason that it served no useful purpose. Young people did need the sort of literature that would help them "to become true men and women." "Histories of nations and of good and noble men and women are very good; for not only are they true and practical, but they serve as inspirations to noble deeds and useful lives." Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 233; Mabel Ashenfelter, "What We Ought to Read," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 3.

[47] "Brother Renbeck and I were holding a meeting out near Kellys, North Dakota. After the service one afternoon I saw Brother Renbeck sitting in a corner of the room

Few if any of these itinerants were full-time pastors or ministers. Susag owned a farm near Paynesville, Minnesota. Otto F. Ring repaired timepieces and painted lamps. Olai Christoffersen was a farmer near Sunburg, Minnesota. Intinerants and colporteurs relied upon the donations and purchases of the saints for the expenses of their tours. But Susag's wife, Martha, informed Basun readers that "provisioning ministers" meant more than covering tour expenses; the needs of the itinerant's family also had to be met: food, clothing and the rent or mortgage. "After all," she said, "they have the same needs you do."[49] Income was also raised for the publishing work and its associated enterprises.

The work of itinerant evangelist or colporteur was not restricted to men. Mention has already been made of Anna Koglin's youthful experience as a colporteur. The

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weeping. I went over to him and asked him what the trouble was. He said, "I am weeping because there were not more sinners in the meeting to get saved. For if there had been more there, more would have been saved.'" Susag, Reminiscences, p. 76.

[48] Ibid., p. 179.

[49] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "You Do Well When You Promote Their Travel," DEB, December 15, 1907, p. 4.

names of several women also appear in Basun reports of evangelistic meetings. Eunice Bradford Ring (1879-1963) was an American citizen who married the Swedish immigrant, O. T. Ring. Mrs. Ring became fluent in Swedish and conducted periodic evangelistic tours, leaving her husband in St. Paul Park at his desk as editor of the Swedish language paper. Thomas Nelson's wife, Keo, and Martha Susag were campmeeting preachers on more than one occasion. These were not lay ministerial roles. Mrs. Ring was an ordained minister, as were Anna K. Renbeck and Micala Simonsen. Simonsen served a brief term as pastor of the Scandinavians around Montevideo, Minnesota.

Women evangelists encountered a special difficulty connected with the then unusual combination of their gender and the "masculine" task of preaching. During a meeting in Norway Lake, Minnesota, Mrs. Susag and two other women evangelists were interrupted by a man who insisted they were only housewives and out of their place.[50] Men and women itinerants expected and encountered opposition from those who had never heard such preaching in the Scandinavian languages. Such opposition could only have been the more strenuous for the fact that the Scandinavians unaccustomed to such doctrine would have been even more appalled at the sight and sound of a woman preacher.

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[50] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, October 15, 1907, pp. 5-6; n.n., n.t., DEB, October 15, 1907, p. 4; S. O. Susag, "From the Workfield," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 6; "From the Offices and the Home," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 4.

Those who could not travel about preaching the message of Den Evangeliske Basun could sell books or subscriptions to either the Swedish or Dano-Norwegian edition of the paper. Subscribers were encouraged to stock an assortment of the books, pamphlets, tracts and papers published at St. Paul Park and then sell them in their own neighborhoods. Occasionally booksellers took to the road selling literature for the Basun family over a greater territory. The most widely recognized and affectionately received of these agents was Olai Christoffersen. This farmer-colporteur wrote accounts of some of his experiences as a traveling salesman of religious literature. The Basun occasionally printed some of these stories and they seem to have become part of the lore of Guds Menighed. Christoffersen artlessly recounted his experiences as testimonies of the activity of God in his life. This lent his stories a spiritual quality that transformed them into a part of the community's piety. One widely known story involved a young woman whose death was so imminent that her father had gone for the undertaker. At this moment Christoffersen appeared and, when informed of the calamity, prayed the prayer of faith for the girl and she was miraculously healed. But the story gained a special aura through the chance meeting of Christoffersen and the girl years later on a North Dakota farm several hundred miles from the location of the original incident. She was now a wife and mother and instantly recognized the colporteur who had been instrumental in her recovery. Christoffersen's story served in itself as a kind of sermon or edifying meditation for *Basun* readers.[51] By their testimonies and varied activities itinerants and colporteurs undergirded the piety of *Guds Menighed*.

An important source of information about the piety of the *Basun* community is the three songbooks published and used by the group. The first of these, *Den Evangeliske Sanger* [The Gospel Singer], pre-dated developments at St. Paul Park, having been published in Chicago in 1899. Thomas Nelson and C. T. Langeson edited and published the collection "out of a long felt need among the children of God who stand outside all parties and are gathered only about Jesus, who is the head of the church."[52] Nelson and Langeson together translated or wrote the lyrics to 126 of the 178 hymns and gospel songs contained in *Den Evangeliske Sanger*. The remaining third were collected from a variety of sources.[53] Of gospel songs translated from English the majority were drawn from collections published by the Church of God: Echoes from Glory (1893), and Songs of the Evening Light (1897). The editors also indicated that some hymns were taken from a book entitled simply Gospel Hymns. The Gospel Trumpet Company published no collection of songs under that title. However, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan and George C. Stebbins had published Gospel Hymns, Numbers 1-6 in 1894. A comparison of titles in this popular hymnal with those found in Den Evangeliske Sanger leads to the conclusion that the Sankey hymnal was a source of some of the hymns and gospel songs published in the 1899 Guds Menighed songbook.

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[51] Susag, *Reminiscences*, p. 145; Christoffersen wrote of other experiences with Indians and vicious dogs. In each of them his colporteuring is advanced or he is preserved from harm through divine intervention. Olai Christoffersen, "Testimonies," *DEB*, November 1, 1906, p. 5.

[52] Publishers' Forward, *Den Evangeliske Sanger*, n.p.

[53] These are: *Spiritual Songs* (10 songs), Kjerstine Madsen (5 songs), *Psalms and Song Book* (4 songs), "Fra Svensk" (2 songs), and one song from *Heavenly Echoes*, *Songs of Zion*, *Pilgrim-Sange*, *Ev.* (sic) *Basun*, *Zions Harpe*, *Pilgr. Harpe* (sic), *Den Lille Sanger*, Pilligram Ottran, O. Arnfeldt.

Nelson and Langeson described the majority of the songs in their book as "new," the balance coming from other collections. The criterion against which songs were considered for inclusion in Den Evangeliske Sanger was whether they were in "agreement with the Word of God." Their attitude was shared by other Scandinavian songbook users:

> We find in our songbooks much which is different from the songs which are sung by the so-called church-unions, and why is there a difference? Because they have not the complete life-giving truth."[54]

The community published a second songbook, Zions Seiers Sange [Songs of Zion's Victory] at St. Paul Park in 1906. The Reverend Barney E. Warren of Springfield, Ohio, one of the most celebrated singers and song-writers in the Church of God, collaborated in the publication of this songbook by arranging and composing music for lyrics translated or written by Nelson and others of Guds Menighed.[55] The volume was co-edited by Nelson and another American song-writer and minister, D. O. Teasley of New York City. Teasley went to St. Paul Park to work on the project, composing music for some of Nelson's songs as well as editing. The company incurred expenses of $600 in the publication of Zions Seiers Sange, and frankly admitted to Basun readers that it "did not know where the money will come from." By sharing in the retiring of this debt, readers were assured, they could help the songbook become a "blessing for all Scandinavians."[56] Attached to the main body of hymns is an appendix of "familiar songs," the majority of which were taken from the 1899 songbook.[57] Also appended was a collection of 58 songs in Swedish. These were almost all translations of hymns found in the Dano-Norwegian main body of the hymnal. The composition of Zions Seiers Sange demonstrated the parochialism of Guds

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[54] Rasmus Nielsen, a letter from Albert Lea, Minnesota in "Testimonies," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 5.

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[55] N.n., n.t., DEB, January 1, 1905, p. 4. The writer of this announcement invited the submission of songs and poetry from "any brother or sister who is completely out in the light to which God now leads and gathers his children." Nelson and Teasley, Zions Seiers Sange, (another reference to the material cited in n. 35), preface.

[56] "Songs of Zion's Victory," DEB, March 1, 1906, p. 3.

[57] Twelve songs were taken from the earlier Evangeliske Sanger; six of the remainder were translations of English gospel songs; one was a song written by Nelson which had not been previously published; the last song did not list a source. Nelson and Teasley, Zions Seiers Sange, (another reference to the material cited in n. 35), pp. 168-194.

Menighed. In translation or original poetry Nelson contributed over half the songs published in the main section of this hymnal. Almost 90% of the songs in that section were written by persons associated with Guds Menighed or the Church of God.[58]

Hymns and gospel songs were sung by Guds Menighed without accompaniment. The use of musical instruments was not permitted. Den Evangeliske Basun carried an article in 1905 which described organs as "man's work," i.e., a human invention. God was unable to inspire a mechanical device, but he could inspire human voices. Since "spiritless things" tend to drive away the Spirit of God, musical instruments were undesirable. A saint wrote approvingly of this article in a testimony letter printed subsequently: "The Spirit of God witnessed in my heart about the same thing; organs in meetings quench the spiritual life."[59]

A cappella, Guds Menighed sang about the same subjects treated in their books and magazines: full salvation, the crucifixion of the "old man," divine healing, the true church and Babylon.[60] The songs of this last category particularly reveal the community's dependence upon the idea of the church for their sense of identity and peoplehood. The church was celebrated in song as a source of life where fellow believers were bound together in love.[61] Quarrels and malice were unknown there as each person subordinated himself or herself to the wills of others.[62] Kjerstine Madsen wrote "Skjult i Gud Med Jesu" [Hidden in God with Jesus], in which she called the church her mother, describing it as a refuge and "certain safeguard."[63]

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[58] Evangeli Basun Publishing Company subsequently published Zions Seiers Sange, Nummer 2 (sic), (St. Paul Park: n.d.), "a collection of spiritual, biblical songs suitable for revivals and edification," which followed the same pattern of heavy reliance upon material from contributors associated with Guds Menighed.

[59] C. E. Orr, "The Organ in Meetings," DEB, December 1, 1905, p. 5; Gunder Kjølaas, a letter from Price, Wisconsin in "Testimonies," DEB, January 1, 1906, p. 5.

[60] See Appendix II for translations of selected hymns in these categories.

On the basis of the hymnody of Guds Menighed the Basun community must be recognized as a primary social group. From it Scandinavian-Americans received emotional, and in some cases financial, support. The church was immediately present in their lives, and for some its advance and restoration was the integrating principle of their own lives to a degree bordering on the compulsive. For these people the church had become their reason for existence. The attitude of worshippers toward Guds Menighed is clearly expressed in a song Thomas Nelson composed after a meeting with some of the saints in Hutchinson, Minnesota, "Tak for Den Tid Vi Samlet Var" [Thanks for the Time We Were Gathered]:

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[61] "O Herlige Samfund" [O Glorious Fellowship], Zions Seiers Sange, Nummer 2, p. 46.

[62] "De Helliges Samfund" [The Saints' Fellowship], Nelson and Teasley, Zions Seiers Sange, p. 85.

[63] Nelson and Langeson, Den Evangeliske Sanger, p. 133.

Thanks for the time we were gathered
In fellowship with each other.
The love you bore to us
Goes with us where we wander.

Thanks for each tear and prayer,
Every word of trust and speech,
Every testimony of Christ, God's Son,
Who came with peace for all.

Thanks for the strength we've enjoyed
By being together.
Thanks for the out-poured Spirit;
Yes, God be praised and honored.

Thanks, Father dear, for the home over there,
Where we shall live together.
Help us to come home at the last.
In Jesus' name, Amen.[64]

Songwriters found ways to tug the heartstrings of lonely immigrants far from family and friends. Nelson translated two English language gospel songs which are models of late Victorian sentimentality, "Where Is My Boy Tonight?" and "I Think About Mother."[65] But a deeper poignancy than these mawkish tunes is discovered in Nelson's poem, "Hjemmets Minder" [Thoughts of Home]. This song recalls a childhood of a distant place and time, but memories of which were amazingly clear, "for the thoughts can speedily rest at the places our hearts hold dear." The songwriter remembers the poverty of a broken-down hovel and "tears trickle down the cheek." The scene's denouement is depicted in the final stanza:

But God has prepared a dwelling,
    far from the land of shadows,

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[64] Ibid., pp. 159-160.

[65] Ibid., pp. 50-52.

Where all is blessed and quiet,
    a home on the heavenly shore,
There will we be gathered, Mother, Father,
    Brother and sister with God,
There will we be eternally glad,
    together as the Savior's bride.[66]

To immigrants who were lonely and homesick, to those who dreamed the false dream of wealth's security, to those who "sigh and are weary," to all these and others the Basun's piety called as the community invited them to accept salvation. By that act of faith they would be received into a community capable of meeting many of their interpersonal needs. Social structure and emotional support, so often required by immigrant peoples,[67] could be found in Guds Menighed.

Piety as Ethics

The piety of Guds Menighed was more than a Scandinavian language version of campmeeting revivalism. For these people all of life's activities and venues were parts of their piety. Their aspiration was a life continuously lived in the presence of the Lord or, as they put it, "walking with God." In such an attitude toward life all experience was potentially sacred since every event carried with it the possibility of walking with God. Therefore piety possessed distinctly ethical overtones in the life of Guds Menighed.

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[66] Nelson and Teasley, Zions Seiers Sange, (another reference to the material cited in n. 35), p. 41. The tensions of the immigration experience furnished an ample supply of illustrations for those who were intent on bringing about religious conversions. Mrs. H. A. Hendricks wrote, "Perhaps you have experienced how burdensome it is to be separated from a dear friend or one of your family. I remember when I had to say good-bye to parents, brothers and sisters to travel to America. The realization was so heavy for me that I could not say one word. But when I think of the separation which is mentioned here (in the Bible-eternal separation after judgment) then it is much graver for me; for those who are separated then will never more obtain an opportunity to meet." "An Eternal Separation," DEB, Feburary 1, 1904, p. 3.

[67] Handlin, The Uprooted, pp. 129-179, passim.

In the Basun community the goal of human temporal existence was to walk perfectly through life in a close working partnership with God. Because Guds Menighed believed people in their own time lived in a day of greater grace than that enjoyed by the patriarchs, true believers could more confidently anticipate the divine companionship than even Enoch, Noah, and Abraham.[68] Walking with God meant walking in the footsteps of Christ. Such devotion was impossible except for those "who have Jesus in the heart and who have crucified the flesh with its lusts and desires."[69] Passing through the crucifixion of the flesh signified the believer's possession of the mind of Christ. Once the individual comes to own "Christ's humble mind"[70] he or she will be able to conquer all of life's difficulties, "and his soul will be filled with joy."[71]

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[68] N.n., n.t., DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 4.

[69] Ibid.

[70] "The Mind of Christ," DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 1.

[71] Mrs. H. A. Hendricks, "In Solitude with Jesus," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 2.

Believers were not left without divine guidance upon the difficult route through earthly life. God used at least four methods to lead his people in their walk with him: (1) the Bible, (2) "inner impressions from the Holy Spirit," (3) "sanctified judgment," and (4) circumstance.[72] The community did not invest these divine methods of assistance with magical qualities. Neither did they claim to have visions or supernatural experiences of that sort. Instead they adopted a rather common sense approach to the ability to discern the Lord's leading. The person who possessed the mind of Christ should be able to discern the Father's leading with no greater difficulty than an apple tree's production of apples.[73] One always had recourse to the Bible as the final arbiter of the trustworthiness of the impressions which seemed to have their source in God; Godly impressions would conform to Scripture. As one correspondent matter-of-factly put the issue, "Preserve yourself in Jesus and his word, and you will be led in the right way."[74]

The Basun community restricted the circle of true believers to only those persons who walked with God. The Kingdom's only citizens were those who did the will of their

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[72] "The Secrets of Divine Leading," DEB, October 1, 1906, p. 6.

[73] "The Fruits of the Spirit," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 3.

[74] Lenora Gahmann, "Whether to be Led," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 6.

Father.[75] Good works were trustworthy signs of the health of one's spiritual roots; sin inevitably blossomed in the life of the person whose religion was compared to a rotten tree.[76] Those who bore the rotten fruit of sin were unentitled to the name "Christian." This conviction stemmed not only from the Basun community's Wesleyan theology, but from its ethical concern for piety as well.

> The Christian's life is a letter which is read by young and old. The Bible on the shelf or on your table, beautifully equipped though it might be, is no more beautiful than the fear of God in your heart and the Christlikeness in your life. Its pages are no more influential than those which a Christian mother writes down before a child in daily life. Be kind, be patient, be mild: these beautiful words of the Bible are worth all the more to the child when it sees them in the parents' life. God's word written in the heart and practiced in life is the best of all family Bibles.[77]

In the piety of Guds Menighed the lives of its members were truly an open book. Believers practiced their religion before the eyes of all. They were incarnate gospels, and the communication of the gospel was the instrument by which God's peace was given to humans. This incarnation of the gospel was important for the edification of fellow believers as well as those outside the circle of faith. The support of likeminded individuals was vitally important to the attempt to shape one's life according to the image of

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[75] N.n., n.t., DEB, January 15, 1906, p. 4.

[76] "Fruits of the Spirit," (another reference to the material cited in n. 73), p. 1.

[77] C. E. Orr, "The Best Bible," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 3.

Christ. This was a major reason for the constant warnings to avoid trafficking with sinners and seek out the company of the saints. Indeed, the group's emphasis on relationships was at times so overbearing that one could almost conclude they proclaimed a "salvation by association."[78]

Basun readers practiced piety by seeking the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit in the expectation of realizing the fruits of the Spirit listed in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Pride and succumbing to temptation were considered the two great marks of impiety.[79] Those who were detoured from their spiritual way by pride or temptation evidenced by their own actions that they did not "obey in all things,"[80] and therefore they were not walking with the Lord. In contrast, true believers demonstrated the saintly, and therefore pious, virtues of humility, joy, peace, long-suffering, etc. Bearing the Spirit's fruits in the garden of life was an important demonstration of true piety, for the good fruit of the Spirit only grew on trees rooted in

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[78] E.g., "Reader, if you associate with sinners and this world then you are a sinner. If you associate with God and his saints then you are a saint; but no saint and sinner associate with each other.

"The life which makes a man a Christian is a life which brings him into association with God. It separates him from this world just as Jesus was separated from this world. This life is eternal life. If he maintains his Christian genuineness, we (sic) can never more die." C. E. Orr, "The Tranquil Life," DEB, July 1, 1905, p. 2.

[79] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "The Word and Faith," DEB, January 1, 1907, p. 6; Nels Renbeck, "Paradise Returned," DEB, February 15, 1907, p. 3.

[80] Ibid.

Christ. In this connection, and by occasionally strained interpretation, piety sometimes reinforced doctrine, as when spiritual peace was understood as "peace and unity among the children of God,"[81] and when those who bore the spiritual fruit of humility were said to perceive clearly that Christ's truly humble spirit did not reign in the world "or in sectism's empty worship . . . ."[82] The counterposing of the fruits of the Spirit over against lapses into pride and temptation placed _Basun_ readers under a heavy ethical obligation, one which the paper exploited to the advantage of the _Basun_ company's various ministries, as illustrated by this 1907 appeal:

> Jesus left heaven's palace and came down to this wicked and blasphemous world, and sanctified himself so that you may become sanctified. You ought to seek this blessed filling of God, that you may be able to help others to the same experience. You ought to pray, you ought to search the Scriptures, you ought to let God work Christian deeds in your soul, and be as good as it is possible for you to be. My reader, you owe this to me and I owe it to you. We owe this to each other and all owe it to God. Are you so faithful, so good, so pure as it is possible for you to be? You owe this, and not less than this, to this world.[83]

Sanctification was not merely a doctrine to be preserved and defended. A considerable segment of _Guds_

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[81] "The Fruits of the Spirit--Peace," _DEB_, November 1, 1904, p. 2.

[82] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Humility," _DEB_, November 1, 1905, p. 2.

[83] "Not for Yourself, but for Others," _DEB_, April 1, 1904, p. 5.

Menighed's piety was synonymous with the seeking and continuation of the experience of sanctification. Those who "consecrated for sanctification" at campmeetings and assembly-meetings were engaged in an act of piety very nearly as important as "going forward" for salvation. Those who had made this act of consecration testified to the warming presence of God in their hearts, asking whether listeners or readers could say their hearts burned ". . . with a holy zeal for the Lord and his service."[84] But the possession of this holy fire was not sought as a single momentary experience; persons in the Basun community aspired to perpetual existence in this spiritually exalted state. The "fire of love" was fed by daily solitary prayer.[85] So daily prayer became mandatory for the saints of Guds Menighed.

The burning presence of heart holiness sanctified all aspects of the believer's existence. In the experience of sanctification thoughts quite naturally are directed toward spiritual subjects, words are "steady and sober," no ill is spoken of others, motives are pure.[86] Holy men and women exercise a sanctifying presence in the world. They themselves are at rest in God and they perceive that each day of life is holy, ". . . and they serve and worship God in spirit every day."[87]

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[84] E.g., "I remember when I was sanctified, how my heart burned in me. It was as if a holy fire burned therein which must be expressed in praises to the Lord, which are a holy incense to the Lord. Dear reader, if you are a child of God then you know what love's fire and warmth are, because you will have experienced them. But how does it now stand with this fire? Does your heart burn with a holy zeal for the Lord and his service?" "The Family's Altar," (another reference to the material cited in n. 44), p. 3.

[85] Ibid.

[86] "A Holy Life," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 6.

Prayer was an indispensable ingredient in the piety of Guds Menighed because of its centrality to the continuing experience of holiness. Without prayer spirituality atrophied, temptation could not be withstood and soon the believer once again would be "dead in sin and transgressions."[88] But when prayer is actively practiced the believer draws "nourishment and power from Jesus to our own life."[89] As assistant Basun editor Micala Simonsen testified, "Daily prayer brings me daily grace to walk before God and conquer sin and the devil."[90]

The people of the Basun community prayed out of their conception of a bold yet intimate relationship between the believer and God. They explained prayer as a "humble, zealous and earnest desire which comes from the heart's depths and ascends to God's throne and expects an answer."[91] Prayer was understood as a conversation between believer and God. Consequently Guds Menighed suspected and condemned memorized or prescribed prayers, especially those published in prayerbooks. As Nelson articulated the community's distinction between true prayers and those published in books:

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[87] "The Sabbath-Question," DEB, May 15, 1904, p. 2.

[88] Micala Simonsen, "Prayer," DEB, October 1, 1906, p. 4.

[89] Ibid. [90] Ibid., p. 5.

[91] Mrs. H. A. Hendricks, "Prayer," DEB, April 15, 1905, pp. 5ff.

> There are many men who observe religious ceremonies, who repeat their confessions of faith and say what they call the Lord's Prayer both publicly and in solitude. But this is not to pray, for prayer consists not in saying some prayers which we have memorized, or reading them from a prayerbook which others have written. It does not consist of empty meaningless words which men say with the mouth without wishing and desiring the things for which they pray, and without believing that God will give us them.[92]

Since worship was only rightly done "in Spirit and in truth," prayerbooks and service books were "completely unnecessary."[93] The Holy Spirit could be trusted to come to the aid of the serious worshipper: "Even if we can only pray with few and stammering words" the Spirit assists those who read the Bible and express in their prayers the desires of their hearts.[94]

The promised assistance of the Spirit did not mean that prayer was always easy or that petitions were immediately granted. A group which taught a doctrine of divine healing needed to find some place in its piety for the realities of difficult or unanswered prayers. Basun writers candidly admitted their perplexity at the silence of God.[95] Perseverance was the solution they offered. Those who were troubled at the apparent inability to get an answer for their prayers were exhorted to pray without ceasing, despite all impediments. The paper assured such seekers that the love of God continued even in the periods when he was silent, and that the temporary withdrawal of his presence promised a closer and more loving relationship for the one who prays "in the fighting struggle for God" until "prayer comes to the place of victory."[96]

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[92] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 249.

[93] Ibid., p. 275. [94] Ibid.

[95] "Perseverance and Victory in Prayer," DEB, April 1, 1904, p. 7.

Along with prayer Bible reading aided the pursuit and maintenance of holiness. The study of Scripture led to reflection and self-examination. Such introspection was always a helpful prerequisite to sincere and effective prayer.[97] A day without Bible reading was compared to a day without food; ". . . it takes a good meal of the Word of God to satisfy the hungry soul."[98] The analogy did not end there: "If you go without food . . . [too long], you will die. Just as certain is it that if you go without [the] spiritual food [of the Bible] day after day when you could eat, you will die spiritually."[99]

"Walking with God" was the Basun community's phrase for their conception of the Christian life. This conception was motivated by a powerful sense of Christian duty. Micala

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Nels Hansen, "The Life," DEB, January 15, 1906, p. 3.

[98] Lorraine Davenport, "Spiritual Food," DEB, May 15, 1905, p. 3.

[99] Ibid.

Simonsen wrote an article for the last issue of the 1906 volume of the Basun under the title "Duty." In that article she said, "Man's duty is to do the Lord's will and this is found laid down in his Word. Indeed the more often we read and examine the inspired Scriptures the better we will understand God's will and our duty. Through doing our duty we please God . . . ."[100] The Bible was to be practiced as well as read and understood. Guds Menighed often read the Bible as a list of "rules given by God for our daily life."[101] While the community believed as a matter of orthodox Christian doctrine the Reformation principle of "justification by faith," its practice of piety rested upon the conviction that the Bible commanded certain duties "toward God and man" about which no indifference was permissible. Jesus had said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments," and this love "will force us to do our duty to those whom we love."[102]

The successful practice of piety depended upon faithful obedience to the many New Testament demands which God had placed on humans so they could retain their "crowns of life."[103] No one was permitted to exercise any selectivity over which of the Bible's precepts might possibly be ignored. Mrs. S. O. Susag described the "whole Bible" as the Word of God which contained many points of duty. Those who follow in some points while rejecting others do "in no part the will of God. God wills that everything he has said shall be observed."[104] The confession of sin was good, "but the Bible says, 'blessed are they who do his commandments, for they may obtain admission to the tree of life and enter through the gates into the city' (Rev. 22:14)."[105]

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[100] Micala Simonsen, "Duty," DEB, December 15, 1906, p. 4.

[101] E.g., the following list: "Let your speech be always charming, seasoned with salt, so you know how to answer each other (Col. 4:6). Do all things without murmuring and doubt (Phil. 2:14). See to it that no one repays evil for evil (I Thess. 5:15). Do not hold back good from those who need it when your hand has the ability to do it (Prov. 3:28). Be deeply devoted to each other in brotherly love, preferring each other in respect (Rom. 12:10). Eat to your necessity (Prov. 26:16). Be content with what you have (Heb. 13:5). Give thanks in all things (I Thess. 5:18). Associate carefully with those outside (Col. 4:5). Keep yourself pure (I Tim. 5:22). "Rules Given By God for Our Daily Life," DEB, December 1, 1906, p. 8.

[102] Simonsen, "Duty," (another reference to the material cited in n. 100).

The community's emphasis on the Christian duty to follow all of this required considerable group attention to the behavior of its members. The Basun published lists of unacceptable activities,[106] and treated as issues of the greatest theological moment questions from readers about the most mundane of matters. So whether or not trapping muskrats was sinful[107] deserved grave consideration because men and women would someday be judged by God according to all their works.[108] Considerable space was therefore devoted to questions of conduct. Even in those areas where no direct Biblical command seemed applicable the paper had a word for conscience stricken souls: in the absence of a written law, ". . . those who stand in close connection with the Lord will always act wisely, for the lamp of the Lord is light in them; he will give them an impression of the right."[109]

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[103] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Obedience to the Word of God," DEB, April 1, 1907, p. 5.

[104] Susag, "Word and Faith," (another reference to the material cited in n. 79).

[105] N.n., n.t., DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 3.

[106] Prohibitions were sometimes cryptic, ("Forsake not"); picturesque, ("Do not let your thoughts be wandering and your words overflowing"); or humorous, ("Do not spit on the floor in a home or in the meeting-house"). "Some Things You Ought Not Do," DEB, July 15, 1907, p. 7; C. F. Hunter, "Some Things Which Should Not Be Done," DEB, October 15, 1905, pp. 4-5.

In practice few areas of life were left open to the consciences of individuals. As a matter of piety the _Basun_ condemned a variety of entertainments, amusements and personal habits which other Christians deemed inoffensive.[110] To many observers such prohibitions often seem odd and only remotely connected with religious faith. Such individuals must remember, however, that _Guds Menighed_ viewed the regard of such practices as _adiaphora_ as the surest indication that elements of pride remained in the heart. Where such pride still lurked none could walk with God in perfect obedience. This principle of piety was the oft-stated rationale for interdicting certain actions and arenas.[111] But forsaking certain forms of entertainments and foods also served an important group function. Those who followed the Basun's requirements in the area of piety were immediately recognizable to each other. Such ascetic practices set them apart from worldly idolator and worldly professor alike. A bond was thereby formed between each ascetic practioner and the group, and community ties were established or solidified in the process.[112]

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[107] "Questions," _DEB_, February 1, 1906, p. 5.

[108] Bastine A. Christoffersen, "To Be Ready," _DEB_, April 1, 1905, p. 2.

[109] C. E. Orr, "Conscience," _DEB_, May 1, 1907, p. 1.

[110] Following is a reasonably inclusive list of forbidden activities: (in some locales) owning an automobile, the wearing of low-cut, see-through or short-sleeved dresses or blouses, the wearing of brightly colored clothing, the use of jewelry or other personal adornment, braided hair, reading novels, attending the theatre, card-playing, gambling, dancing, any activities on Sunday other than worship, the use of tobacco, alcohol, tea or coffee. Forsaking this last item was a particularly heavy burden borne by Scandinavians. A

If the motive of the Christian life was an obligatory sense of duty, then the goal of that life was the Christian hope. In the truest sense the world was not Guds Menighed's home. Compared with eternity temporal existence was "only brief and insignificant." The community believed the New Testament cautioned against regarding "this earth as our home or abiding-place, but only as a temporary or brief place

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woman named Johanna Gabrielsen testified to this fact in The Gospel Trumpet (December 13, 1906), p. 5.

[111] Keo Nelson, "Some Thoughts on Apparel," DEB, August 1, 1907, p. 5; "Pride," DEB, September 15, 1904, p. 6; Hanna Negaard, "Jesus Our Example," DEB, December 1, 1904, p. 2.

[112] Thomas F. O'Dea originally made a very similar point about Mormon group behavior and asceticism in The Mormons (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 143-146.

of residence."[113] The transitory state of the earth and its goods meant that those who walked with God would forsake them in the pursuit of a modest, righteous and, finally, Godly lifestyle. Possessions beyond life's necessities were to be employed for the greater glory of God ". . . and our fellowman's temporal and eternal well-being."[114] As in other aspects of the Basun community's life, no compromise was tolerated.[115]

Some interesting requests were made on the basis of the principle that ownership of life's goods extended no further than necessities. Thomas Nelson once appealed for a person to sell his or her farm and use the proceeds to purchase a smaller but more expensive parcel near the publishing house properties in St. Paul Park. The purchaser would own the land and work it, growing produce and livestock for consumption by the Basun family employed at the publishing plant. Any "brother" sensing the Lord's direction in this matter was encouraged to write the Basun immediately.[116]

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[113] "Death and Heaven," DEB, March 15, 1905, p. 3; N. Renbeck, "Our Possessions," DEB, October 15, 1904, p. 8.

[114] "The Mind of Christ," (another reference to the material cited in n. 70), pp. 2-3; "The Fruits of the Spirit," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 2; Nels Renbeck, "Striving After God," DEB, September 1, 1906, p. 1.

[115] M[artha] S[usag], "Who Owns Your Inclination?," DEB, November 15, 1906, p. 2; C. E. Orr, "What Is Your Life's Goal?," DEB, July 1, 1906, p. 2; Micala Simonsen, "A Christian Life," DEB February 1, 1907, p. 4; "What Christians Must Not Do," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 1; Mrs. H. B. Haftorson, "Without Worry," DEB, July 1, 1906, p. 1.

[116] "A Farm for the Lord," DEB, January 1, 1905, p. 4.

Self-denial was an act of piety and a means of advancing toward the Christian hope. As Nels Renbeck put matters, ". . . temperance and self-denial are means of assistance in developing our spiritual lives; they qualify us to please God."[117] Itinerants, colporteurs, publishing house workers and others were cited as noble examples of self-denial, while those who had temporarily participated in the Basun ministry only to "lay aside their armor" were lamented as if already lost.[118] In its call for discipline and rejection of temporal goods the Basun community's practice of self-denial might be understood as the pietistic application of the doctrine of the crucifixion of the "old man."[119] As in the matter of identifying acceptable behavior, theology came to have a very close application in piety. Not only did the community recognize one another by behavior; it enforced a strict discipline as well.

Guds Menighed's emphases on the behavioral aspects of the Christian life, Christian duty and the Christian hope reached through self-denial combined to produce its gospel of endurance. Pain, suffering, trials, hardship, even death itself were all to be borne without worry or anxiety.[120] Concern for such matters was useless in that it accomplished nothing positive, but also because those who walked with God enjoyed the great privilege of casting all their cares upon him in prayer.[121] Beyond that, the group's attitude toward suffering was predicated on the belief that personal setbacks or even disasters served a divine purpose. Suffering enhanced compassion for the suffering of others. Affliction accentuated the positive blessings of God. Trials revealed Satan in his true colors. True believers could thank God for suffering, for it draws them "to the company of God and the angels."[122]

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[117] Nels Renbeck, "My Children, Keep Yourself From Idols (I John 5:21)," DEB, December 15, 1906, p. 5.

[118] R. Rothman, "Christ's Compelling Love," DEB, October 15, 1906, p. 1.

[119] Nels Renbeck, "The Children of Israel's Wandering in the Wilderness," DEB, Feburary 1, 1906, p. 3; Robert Rothman, "Our Complete Example," DEB, August 15, 1906, p. 4; "Two Sorts of Societies," DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 5; "The Mind of Christ," (another reference to the material cited in n. 70).

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[120] M[artha] S[usag], "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled," DEB, August 1, 1907, p. 4; "Death and Heaven," (another reference to material cited in n. 113); Keo A. Nelson, "Be Glad," DEB, March 15, 1905, p. 8; S. O. Susag, "Joy in the Lord," DEB, May 15, 1905, p. 1.

[121] "God's Care for His Children," DEB, March 15, 1904, p. 5.

[122] M[artha] S[usag], "How the Christian Ought to Bear Up in Time of Trial," DEB, November 1, 1907, p. 8; Susag, "Your Heart Be Troubled," (another reference to the material cited in n. 120); Jacob Woll, "Trials and Temptations," DEB, October 15, 1907, p. 6; Christine Evensen, a letter from Willmar, Minnesota in "Testimonies," DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 6; S. H. Eddings, "Using Sorrow," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 5; Vada M. Sunderland, "Thankfulness," DEB, June 15, 1904, p. 6; and this poem, "For What Do You Strive?," by H. K. Dahl:

"Man gathers goods, man gathers gold,
Man builds treasure upon treasure;
But when man has gained the full grasp
Then is the dark night of death.
When death gloomily knocks,
Then poor and without house
The rich man goes empty-handed

In three significant areas the piety of _Guds Menighed_ clearly was at variance with the typical piety of Scandinavian Lutheran immigrants. Those areas are cult, ministry and ethics. The degree of variation between the two forms of piety reinforces the thesis that some Scandinavian immigrants did find it possible to reject the religion of their homelands.

Guds Menighed modified and enlarged the understanding and practice of the sacraments to a point where little or no similarity any longer existed between its usage and that of other Scandinavian Lutheran immigrants. The _Basun_ community substituted the understanding and usages associated with the term ordinances for those associated with the idea of sacraments. Included as one of the Christian ordinances was the practice of footwashing. Infant baptism was rejected and re-baptism often required. Communion was interpreted in a strictly symbolical fashion, even to the point of attaching ecclesiological interpretations in accord with _Guds Menighed's_ doctrine of the church. The practice of footwashing was introduced to and required of members of an

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To death's quiet house.

"To win name and honor here
Have I no great intent.
I will gain name and honor there,
Once through the gate of heaven.
I will be rich only in hope and faith,
And love to God.
So shall my soul dwell in the light
For eternity with God . . ."

DEB, April 1, 1905, p. 1.

ethnic group among whom the rite would have been quite foreign.

The ministry which officiated among the people of Guds Menighed was of a composition quite different from that familiar to Scandinavian Lutherans. Few of the Basun community's clergy were full-time workers, instead combining their spiritual vocations with their temporal occupations. But the marked deviation from the Lutheran ministry came at the point of including women as well as men. Feminine involvement in the ministry of Guds Menighed extended beyond the merely functional discharge of ministerial roles. In their right to ordination women in Guds Menighed enjoyed ministerial status as well. By contrast, during this period the Lutheran ministry was closed to women.

A third area of difference between the Basun community's piety and that of Scandinavian Lutherans comes at the point of the former's ethical expression. One must cautiously assess the extent of variation here. Certainly those Scandinavians of the pietistically inclined Lutheran synods shared some of Guds Menighed's beliefs and attitudes in this area. But the Basun community made little or no effort to draw upon any similarities which might have existed. Insofar as normative Scandinavian Lutheranism was concerned, the Basun community perceived clear differences between its own close association of practice with belief and what it interpreted as Lutheran indifference to a connection between faith and good works.

In piety as in doctrine Guds Menighed offered Scandinavian immigrants a form of Christianity quite unlike the tradition in which they formerly had been nurtured. Participation in the Basun community required a complete break with the religious past in matters of practice as well as belief. The fact that some Scandinavian immigrants were able to exchange not only doctrine but also piety emphatically illustrates the magnitude of that break. Once newcomers had taken that step, a new community of belief and action was ready to accept and nurture them in their new found faith.

CHAPTER V

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

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In 1907 Walter Rauschenbusch published the first of his major works, Christianity and the Social Crisis. That significant book expressed one element of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century movement within American Christianity known as the Social Gospel. Rauschenbusch, Washington Gladden and others associated with the Social Gospel were not alone in their concern for the ills of American society. Coincidentally Thomas Nelson also published a book in 1907 that treated important contemporary social issues. Nelson's concern for matters of family life, economics and health suggests an approach to social problems sharply different from the program advocated by Rauschenbusch. Yet some of their concerns were similar even if theological frameworks and proposed solutions were not. Child labor, the working conditions of the laboring class, and a fairer distribution of wealth were Social Gospel issues also addressed by Nelson and other Evangeliske Basun writers.

Guds Menighed was aware of several of the great social issues during the two decades from 1900 to 1920. Many topics received direct comment in the group's books and newspapers; others were treated only obliquely. On occasion the Basun community favored the same social measures advocated by other American denominations. But while agreement may have existed as to desirable ends, Guds Menighed did not share the Social Gospel movement's basic commitment to reconstruct the social order. The Basun community endorsed remedies for unjust social conditions which typically might be described as individualistic. In this the group resembles mid-nineteenth century perfectionists' efforts at social reform.[1]

The Basun community advocated reform for certain social problems, but attacked what it termed "reformism." More than anything else in the group's approach to social problems this selective approach to reform distinguished it from social reconstructionists. In the main, Guds Menighed was satisfied with the structure and benefits of life in America. They were sensitive to the needs of the less-advantaged, but quite silent on the question of reconstructing the social order. The combination of a general social awareness, calls for the reform of certain social ills and a disapproval of "reformism" yields an image of Guds Menighed's social conscience in which selectivity, benevolence and charity emerge as fundamental characteristics.

The St. Paul Park community generally sought isolation from the "world," therefore worldly instruments of reform were unacceptable. But the group could also be pricked by its own conscience, especially on the basis of its perfectionist idealism. Basun readers genuinely believed that Christians ought to love their fellow human beings, and this love required them to extend the hand of charity to those in need. Guds Menighed's program of social action therefore extended beyond the range of journalistic forays against social abuses. The community did in fact make considerable efforts to alleviate certain human needs which came to its attention. The most noteworthy of these efforts was the founding of the Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest, which operated under the management of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company from 1907 to 1920. Guds Menighed labored mightily to build a wall between itself and the world. But doors existed in that wall, and occasionally those doors were opened.

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[1] See Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, Harper Torchbooks, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

The Problem of Reform

During the years of Basun publishing company operations in the United States reform enterprises of all varieties were commonplaces of American public life.[2] Populism, progressivism, muck-raking journalism, socialism and other reform oriented movements were in the process of leaving their lasting marks on American society. Guds Menighed was isolated neither from this climate of reform nor the injustices which called forth the reform effort. In his 1907 book, Home, Health and Success, Thomas Nelson offered his support, albeit somewhat remotely, for a typical progressivist project: the construction of more playgrounds for the children of New York City. The language of Nelson's statement of support has the ring of progessive values and rhetoric.

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[2] See Ray Ginger, Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914, 2nd ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1975); Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F. D. R., (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1955); Howard Mumford Jones, The Age of Energy, 1865-1915, (New York: Viking Books, 1971); and Henry F. May, The End of American Innocence, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1959).

> The following quotation from the "Annual Report of the Department of the Interior" not only shows the sad lack in American cities of furnishing the proper playgrounds for children, but also shows that the immorality and the undermining of physical and mental health resulting from this unnatural condition is being more and more realized . . . .[3]

While Nelson endorsed the efforts of private individuals to correct conditions such as an insufficient number of playgrounds,[4] elsewhere he and his colleagues clarified their position concerning "reformism." In Den Evangeliske Basun's first year of publication at St. Paul Park the paper found itself under attack from Reform, a temperance paper published in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Reform ostensibly objected to the Basun's position on the issue of women's roles in home and society. The Basun replied by saying ". . . that if men would follow the doctrine the Basun holds forth, Reform's goals would also be reached."[5] Reconstructing the precise nature of the dispute between the two papers is difficult, but the St. Paul Park community's church benevolence approach to reform is evident; injustices may be remedied, but only through those methods which accord with the doctrine of Guds Menighed. From its own theological point of view Basun did in fact speak to a variety of social issues. These included child labor, wealth and poverty, politics, the women's movement, and economics and labor.

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[3] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 268. This book was originally published in 1907 by Evangeli Basun Publishing Company as Hjem, Helbred og Lykke. Although himself an immigrant Nelson wrote better English than Dano-Norwegian. Therefore he prepared his manuscripts in English and they were translated in Dano-Norwegian by office editor Micala Simonsen. Simonsen was the daughter of a Norwegian railroad executive and had received a fine education in Norway before emigrating. Since no copies of Hjem, Helbred og Lykke could be located, I have used an available copy of the English text in the belief that it was published from Nelson's original manuscript.

[4] Ibid., pp. 269-270.

The Basun community strongly condemned the practice of child labor and supported state and federal laws prohibiting the employment of children in factory labor. Factory owners were criticized for forcing children to work long hours in order to increase their own wealth, and "money-grubbing" parent-employers, especially fathers, were attacked on the supposition that they substituted their own children in jobs which should have been performed by hired wage-earners; "such parents ought to be ashamed of themselves before God and men."[6] Nelson appears to have been reasonably conversant with the problem of child labor. He quoted affidavits offered in support of Senator Albert Beveridge's 1907 amendment to a bill regulating child labor in the District of Columbia. Beveridge had amended the bill for the purpose of eliminating interstate commerce between businesses employing children under the age of fourteen in factories or mines. Nelson expressed his hope that the amendment would become law and then added, "It is really astonishing how the rich are allowed to ruin our homes and even our nation to a great extent in order to satisfy their thirst for gain."[7]

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[5] "They Do Not Tolerate Sound Doctrine," DEB, April 15, 1904, p. 5.

[6] "A Father's Duty," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 7.

Contributors to Den Evangeliske Basun appreciated the fact that poverty often forced children into factories. Therefore the paper addressed itself to the problem of the unequal distribution of wealth in society. Some "capitalists," charged the Basun, "profess themselves to be Jesus' followers, however they scrape together their money without respecting the poor's cry for help."[8] Neither wealth or poverty were guarantors of salvation, but "Christianity will make an end of 'trusts.'"[9] Nelson shared his Protestant contemporaries' antipathy for the city. He sought to inspire parents with "a love for rural life and country homes in preference to city life."[10] Cities were sad places full of poverty, vice, and conditions which tempted people to sin. One of the means by which poor people were oppressed was through usurious loan practices. Only that rate of interest allowed by the law of the land or the law of God was permissible. Den Evangeliske Basun imposed a religious sanction on its theory of just economics by attaching to its opinion on loan rates and practices the New Testament verse which said, "Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."[11]

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[7] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 209-210.

[8] "Christian Conduct," DEB, January 15, 1904, p. 3.

[9] Ibid.,; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Wealth," DEB, December 1, 1905, p. 8.

[10] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 209-210.

In their efforts to reform American society progressives made considerable use of local and national political systems. Den Evangeliske Basun did not share the common progressive attitude which regarded politics as an acceptable instrument of social change. Christians were to be filled with the Spirit of God, but "politiks" was of the spirit of the world. The "spirit of politics" spoiled the lives of many, "even preachers."[12] Political participation carried with it the inherent danger of imbibing a demonic spirit which the Basun associated with American party politics. According to the paper no party deserved the support of its subscribers. Democrats and Republicans alike permitted the sale of intoxicating liquor, "and all parties permit things which are not much better . . . ."[13] Den

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[11] "Conduct," (another reference to the material cited in n. 8).

[12] "Spirituality," DEB, June 15, 1907, p. 4; "The Devil in Politics," DEB, November 1, 1904, p. 6.

[13] Ibid.

Evangeliske Basun fell short of actually discouraging its readers from voting in the general election of 1904, but just barely. Certainly it left them with that inference when it concluded its November 1 article on the election thus: "Can a child of God support such wickedness and still be free of mankind's blood? We will let each one answer this question for themselves and for their God."[14]

Guds Menighed's selective church benevolence approach to social issues appears most clearly in the manner in which the group treated the emerging women's movement. "The modern teaching that women should be men and men women"[15] was heartily condemned. The group stood on its interpretation of the New Testament and realized that "this does not always agree with modern views."[16] Guds Menighed took a traditional position on the question of women's role in society. But this conservatism was counterbalanced by the group's uncoerced willingness to ordain women. This attitude is all the more noteworthy in the absence of comment opposing women's ordinations anywhere in the extant literature of the group. In restricted cases, then, Guds Menighed practiced equality of the sexes while it simultaneously rejected the women's movement as an instrument of achieving the general application of sexual equality in all areas of life. The group did not discuss this apparent contradiction, for they would not have seen it as such. Guds Menighed regarded the ordination of women to be the practice of the New Testament church. The women's movement was an example of the "worldly" way of reform. The group demonstrated no hesitancy about which of the two ways it would follow.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] "Tolerate Doctrine," (another reference to the material cited in n. 5); "Questions," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 4.

[16] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 152.

The Basun community gave more of its published attention to problems of economics and labor than to any other contemporary social problems. The group approached labor relations out of a clearly stated work ethic that included the traditional economic virtues of thrift, honesty and perseverance. Thomas Nelson believed idleness to be "one of the worst evils that can befall any home or people."[17] Labor was a blessing necessary to life and health and the biblical injunction was, "If any will not work, neither should he eat."[18] However Nelson naively applied the injunction by failing to notice the problem of involuntary unemployment in industrial America. Self-employment was preferable to working for another individual, but the Basun community recognized that most people found it necessary to work in someone else's employ, at least until financially established. It was at this point that Nelson expressed an attitude often associated with Gilded Era economics:

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[17] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 394.

[18] Ibid.

"Most great men started from the bottom of the ladder; and that is the best place for all young people to start, whether rich or poor, high or low."[19] Young people in particular needed to be familiarized with the virtues of honest labor. One of the lessons such practical experience afforded was that success came to those who took an interest in their work, "apply both brain and hands to their task," and determined to succeed.[20] Success in the world of business required more than the industrious application of time and ability. Nelson also believed that success was the result of a career that embodied thrift, honesty and perseverance. In fact, he said, success was "sure to come" to those who spend frugally even the smallest income while they persevere in their chosen vocation. Honesty was the best policy. The success that might come through dishonest business practices was "not worth having."[21]

In spite of Nelson's appreciation for the role laboring people might play in their own achievement he and others of the Basun community also knew that chances of success were also influenced by the employer's willingness to pay a fair wage. The paper spoke against the "tendency in many to hire their employees for as little as possible."[22]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 308-309. [20] Ibid., p. 511.

[21] Ibid., p. 519; C. E. Orr, "Diligence," DEB, December 1, 1906, p. 6; Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 512, 530.

[22] The paper gave this example: "A is a worker and a poor man. He goes to B and asks for work. B has work

Martha Susag suggested to a reader who wondered whether Christians could seek better paying jobs that such desires were appropriate so long as the work met biblical standards, which meant the labor could not violate the group's ethical code, the earnings were to be dedicated to God and "employed according to God's leading."[23] Nelson endorsed the idea of an eight hour day and identified with laboring people's need for "proper reward for their services." But his support stopped short of approving strikes as a method of gaining wage increases. The brief comment Nelson made on strikes resembles something a factory owner might have said: "If they [laborers] would learn how to be interested in the work they are doing and would then add economy to industry, they would be more sure of success and of happy homes free from strikes as well as from the cares of life."[24]

Guds Menighed's attitude toward some of the great social issues of its day demonstrates that reform, in the

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which he wants done, but he wants it done for as little as possible. A requests a certain sum for doing the work or so much per day and knows that he needs this much to care properly for his family, and believes the work is worth it. B does some calculating and finds that he could pay A what he wants and still come out good; but he knows that A is poor and still must work for less pay, so he offers less for the work. A, rather than lose the work and be unemployed, consents to work for less than his labor is really worth.

"What does the Word of God say about this? 'You masters! Show your servants what is right and acceptable, knowing that you have a Lord in heaven' (Col. 4:1)." "Christian Conduct," DEB, January 1, 1904, p. 3.

[23] M[artha] S[usag], "Questions," DEB, September 15, 1907, p. 5.

[24] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 511, 401.

sense in which progressives used the term, was not nearly as important as the benevolent amelioration of the unjust circumstances of specific individuals. The Basun community was clearly quite aware of several significant contemporary social issues. While it occasionally shared certain goals with more consciously reform-oriented groups, Guds Menighed endorsed neither their programs or tactics.

Christian Love and Social Concern

Guds Menighed was motivated to relieve unjust social conditions for individuals by its conception of the love of God expressed in the lives of believers, and its attendant understanding that believers were obligated to reflect that love to others, including society's victims. Each sincere member of the Basun community aspired to be a true follower of God; no other option existed for the true believer than to obey God as a loving child. Such obedience would necessarily manifest itself in increased love and good works.[25] Piety and doctrine thus merged to stimulate the Basun community's style of social involvement. Piety's aspiration to "walk with God" combined with the group's doctrinal emphasis on sanctification as the stimulus to perfect love and to this combination was added the community's experience of suffering. The product was "compassion in our hearts for those who suffer; we can therefore sympathize with them and be able to help them."[26]

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[25] Nels Renbeck, "The Love of God," DEB, January 1, 1907, p. 2; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Followers of God," DEB, May 1, 1904, p. 3.

Social concern was also a means of the group's expression of its service to God. Those who were indifferent to the needs of others or who turned a deaf ear to the cries of the needy while they pursued their own gratification were certainly not in the service of God.[27] One Basun writer went so far as to interpret John 8:31 as a test of faith for all disciples. Jesus had commanded his servants to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. The faith of those who obeyed this command could be considered genuine. But where the command to care for society's outcasts was disregarded faith was suspect.[28] No earthly goods which believers might possess exceeded the value of the spiritual treasures of love and brotherhood. These heavenly goods were to be gathered in preference to wealth on earth. Out of this conviction Den Evangeliske Basun communicated a sense of urgency in its observations that much of the human need surrounding Guds Menighed could be alleviated by the community through its own efforts. Members were exhorted to employ earthly wealth "to the glorification of God . . . in every regard, in the least significant thing . . ."[29]

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[26] Ibid., Renbeck; Chris Holte, "Love," DEB, January 1, 1907, p. 4.

[27] Micala Simonsen, "Self Love," DEB, June 1, 1907, p. 5.

[28] C[hris] Holte, "Unbelief and Faith," DEB, February 15, 1907, p. 6.

[29] Micala Simonsen, "Superfluity," DEB, May 1, 1907, p. 5.

The St. Paul Park community further justified its appeals for "benevolence to the needy" through its equation of the service to people with the service of God. To serve one's fellow human beings was identified with serving God, or, as one writer put it, "You serve Jesus by serving your fellowman."[30] By service to "fellowman" the Basun writers often meant the employment of means intended to produce the salvation of sinners. In fact benevolent enterprises were sometimes suggested as evangelism tactics; they were one method of bringing needy men and women to the point where they would listen to Guds Menighed evangelists and preachers.[31] But the community did not always ground its social ministries in such opportunism. There is no mistaking the altruism in the appeal of an anonymous Basun writer who said, "Ignore your own wishes and comforts in order to relieve the needs of others."[32]

The perfect love which resulted from the experience of entire sanctification was the crucial concept which motivated Guds Menighed's varied social ministry. But the community's idea of love had different meanings and applications. These applications were similar to concentric circles drawn around the central idea of love for God. The next relationship was familial love, outside of which was brotherly love. Brotherhood was an intra-church relationship, the love extended to all true believers, i.e. members of the true church. The love of believers one for another was to be of the same order as Christ's love for the church; " . . . we must love them more than ourselves."[33] Outside the circle of brotherhood was the circle of neighborly love. Fellow believers had priority on the love of their fellow saints, "but thereafter come our neighbors."[34] These were defined as all those with whom the Basun community came into contact, even strangers unknown to any community member. But the love which Guds Menighed extended its neighbors was inferior to that extended to saintly brothers and sisters; "we must also love our neighbors as ourselves."[35] Although the degree of neighborly love might indeed have been qualified, the group did not limit the manner in which that love might be enacted. Love to neighbor "consists in assisting in their need, whether it is temporal or spiritual. It is to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, minister to the sick, visit those who are in prison, give to the needy, open our homes to the homeless, as well as witness to Jesus and spread the Gospel among our fellowmen, which is the greatest good we can do towards them."[36]

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[30] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 217-218; Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, p. 86; "Interest for the Cause of God," DEB, February 1, 1907, p. 2.

[31] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 319.

[32] "Cause of God," (another reference to the material cited in n. 30).

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[33] Nelson, Tro, Haab og Kaerlighed, p. 91, my emphasis.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., my emphasis; see pp. 86-94 for Nelson's detailed explanation of these relationships.

Guds Menighed applied its principle of "service to people is service to Christ" in various endeavors intended to remedy the circumstances of individuals: relief for widows and orphans, the distribution of literature to Scandinavian inmates of the Minnesota State Prison, matters of health, hygiene and diet, the issue of war and peace, assurance societies and, most of all, the sponsorship of the Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest. In none of these efforts was the group's motive the refashioning of the social fabric. Instead the St. Paul Park community took the simpler and limited, but at the same time more direct, approach of providing immediate assistance to those who required it.

The Basun community's basic approach to social problems is illustrated in the case of an unnamed widow who was converted in religious meetings in St. Paul Park in 1904. Den Evangeliske Basun detailed her difficult economic circumstances: winter was about to arrive and, although willing to work, she would not be able to purchase shoes and clothing for herself and her children. The paper reminded its Christian readers of their biblical duty to aid widows and orphans and gave an address to which contributions might be sent. The Basun promised that the money sent for the widow's support would "be spent in the correct manner."[37] Subsequent issues of the paper reported several contributions and her "worthy use" of them.[38] Monetary assistance for the destitute was not limited to local problems. Hunger on a global scale also was part of Den Evangeliske Basun's awareness. Accordingly, the group included within its field of action the securing of contributions for the relief of world hunger.[39]

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[36] Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 318.

A biblical rationale similar to that used in support of calling for contributions for the needy justified the community's concern for men imprisoned at the state institution at Stillwater. For the moral and spiritual uplift of Scandinavian prisoners the Basun staff organized the free distribution of the company's books, tracts and periodicals, much to the appreciation of Henry Wolfer, prison superintendent. The cost of the program was borne by Basun readers whose consciences were moved to come to the aid of their "fellow countrymen." The group's concern was not for prisons and prison conditions but the prisoners; Matthew 25:36, 40 was quoted in support of the effort.[40]

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[37] Editor [Thomas Nelson], n.t., DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 4.

[38] N.n., n.t., DEB, December 1, 1904, p. 4.

[39] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Duties Toward the Needy," DEB, July 1, 1905, p. 8. "We see so many dear children of God fill their tables with good and many different dishes, indeed with delicacies. Dear children of God! Let us remember how many there are over the world who have not the necessary food . . . . Let us not think that we have nothing to eat if we have not meat, butter, preserved fruit or some sort of delicacies for every meal." Della Shelbon, DEB, October 1, 1907, pp. 6-7.

Guds Menighed approached race relations apparently out of the same straightforward application of their understanding of what the Bible required. Black Americans did not figure very prominently in the pages of Den Evangeliske Basun. But the few references to them yield some interesting insights into the group's probable racial attitudes. For example, a slight indication exists that Thomas Nelson may have been influenced by the "race thinking" current in his day.[41] On the other hand, within the Basun community there also existed the open attitude exemplified by this portion of a letter from an eastern saint by the name of Thomas Olson:

> I can send greetings from all God's saints in New York and surrounding, Jersey City and Hoboken. We have it quite glorious together: Americans, Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, white and black; we are on so good terms because we are all made white in the blood of the Lamb, and in Jesus skin color makes no difference.[42]

The Basun community also apparently resisted pressure to cease the publication of foreign language materials during the years of the Great War. From its beginning until 1916 Den Evangeliske Basun was set in a Dano-Norwegian version of the German fraktur type. The paper changed to a

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[40] "Literature for the State Prison," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 4; n.n., n.t., DEB, November 15, 1904, p. 4.

[41] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 83.

[42] Thomas Olson, a letter from Jersey City, NJ in "Testimonies," DEB, August 1, 1906, p. 5.

Roman type adapted to the Danish alphabet in January of 1916. Subscribers were invited to share their opinions of the change with the Basun office. Before the end of the month the paper returned to the earlier style of type. Publication continued in that style at least through a portion of World War I. The permanent changeover to the modern typestyle came sometime between January 16, 1918 and October 27, 1920.[43] The concerns and attitudes of the readership apparently carried more weight in the office of the Basun managing editor than any voices calling for the immediate assimilation of all immigrants in America.

Not all the social issues which attracted the attention of Guds Menighed were of such obvious significance as racial and ethnic relations. Diet was an item of interest to Basun writers and readers for two reasons: that grounded in piety, as discussed in the previous chapter, and that grounded in social concern. The group recommended a simple diet that avoided the use of "stimulants and highly seasoned food." Nutrition was an item of genuine concern, and it was generally believed that the less food was prepared the more nutritious it would remain. Therefore most vegetables were eaten raw, as were eggs. The consumption of meat was discouraged but not prohibited. A diet which contained heavy supplements of fruit was preferred in the belief that such was healthier than one containing large amounts of meat and other foods difficult to digest.[44] One suggested rule of thumb for persons concerned about the contents of their diets was to study the chemical elements of their food and then consume those elements in the same proportions as they composed the body. Readers were referred to a publication of the United States Department of Agriculture for chemical analyses of the elements in certain foods.[45]

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[43] There exists no evidence that Evangeli Basun Publishing Company received any pressure to cease publication in the Scandinavian languages, but such pressure was common in the Midwest during the war years. In the autumn of 1918 the Gospel Trumpet Company received a letter from the chairman of the "Madison County Council of Defense" in which it was suggested that the publishing house discontinue its German publications "on account of prevailing sentiment." On October 3, 1918 the Board of Directors of the Gospel Trumpet Company decided to continue publication of the German paper "for the present." Warner Press Archives (Gospel Trumpet Company), Board of Directors Minutes. October 1 and October 3, 1918. If the English language Church of God resisted efforts to halt publication of its German paper, it seems likely the Scandinavians in St. Paul Park would have had the support of their American brothers and sisters for the continuation of the Dano-Norwegian and Swedish language papers.

In Guds Menighed's practice of social ethics the church assumed primary responsibility for meeting human needs. This conception set the Basun community in firm opposition to an institution that was very important to many immigrants--the assurance society. Within the Basun community men and women relied upon each other for the alleviation of suffering and need; brothers and sisters in faith were to extend freely their love to each other. For this reason assurance societies were regarded as pale imitations of the divine sense of obligation that was a necessary element of any truly Christian community. The Spirit and love of God were present in the true church and motivated it to all those charitable acts dictated by necessity. The church's "duty" was to serve the Lord in this manner.[46]

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[44] "Eating Fruit," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 7; Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 261.

[45] Ibid., Nelson, p. 361.

War and peace was an issue over which many immigrant groups were divided, at least during the initial stages of World War I. But Guds Menighed supported neither side during the Great War. "As practiced among the nations," war was a grievous sin against the teachings of the New Testament.[47] The best course of action for those who called themselves true children of God was to refrain from participation in the war. Thomas Nelson believed the war was yet another indictment of Protestantism; Europeans' ability to "exterminate each other from the face of earth" contradicted the principle of apostolic life and unity.[48] The January 5, 1916 issue of Den Evangeliske Basun greeted the new year with the desire "to see a world revival in the place of a world war."[49] The Basun's stand on war and peace appeared as early as 1905. In response to a question on the possibility of world peace the paper answered not in terms of social justice or political machinations, but in the same simple application of biblical command to human problems which always characterized its social awareness and ministry.[50]

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[46] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Widows and Orphans," DEB, May 1, 1905, p. 5; Nels Renbeck, "The Church of God," DEB, October 1, 1905, p. 1.

[47] "Questions," DEB, December 15, 1905, p. 4.

[48] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 320.

[49] "New Year's Greetings," DEB, January 5, 1916, p. 3.

As the war continued, however, Guds Menighed may have softened its position. Both the Swedish and Dano-Norwegian papers carried informative articles quite unrelated to spiritual matters. The work of the American Red Cross was discussed, particularly its efforts among American soldiers stationed in Europe. Den Evangeliske Basun also carried a second article on the young automobile industry. Notice was made of the automobile's application to warfare. Armies "on both sides of the battle-lines" would be able to transport men, food and ammunition more effectively through the use of gasoline-powered equipment. Absent from this discussion was the heavy moralizing in which the Basun staff often engaged when contemplating current events outside the realm of religion. One might have expected to find a lament over the tragic waste of men and material and how much better off the world would have been had all the effort devoted to making war been devoted to making men and women disciples of Jesus. Was Guds Menighed moderating its views in support of the war effort? Insufficient evidence exists to warrant a conclusion, but the absence of religious comment in a paper theretofore quite willing to offer its spiritual assessment of secular events is noteworthy.[51]

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[50] "Questions," DEB, July 1, 1905, p. 4.

The St. Paul Park community was especially concerned for the care of the aged, and accordingly allotted the greatest portion of its time and capital in the founding and management of the Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest. Early in 1907 the publishing company leadership was corresponding about the possibility of establishing an institution for the care of the elderly.[52] By April of that year the Basun office was receiving gifts and pledges for the as yet unannounced project. In its May 1 issue the Basun disclosed the purchase of a building for the "Old People's Home," as the institution was informally known. The intention of the home's supporters was that it be the possession of the entire church--English and Scandinavian--in the Midwest. But from the beginning the Old People's Home was essentially a Scandinavian project. Trustee elections were planned for the annual St. Paul Park campmeeting in June.[53] Before the conclusion of that meeting articles of incorporation had been drawn up and filed.[54] Thomas

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[51] "Events of Our Time," DEB, January 15, 1918, p. 16; "New Year's Greeting," ET, January 1, 1918, p. 2; "The Red Cross," ET, February 1, 1918, p. 10.

[52] Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Encouragement to the People," DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 6.

[53] N.n., n.t., DEB, May 1, 1907, p. 4; "Campmeeting and the Home for Old People," DEB, May 15, 1907, p. 4.

[54] Washington County, Minnesota, Book M of Bonds, No. 41832, p. 599. (See Appendix I for the complete text of the Articles of Incorporation); Church of God Institutions at St. Paul Park, Minnesota, (n.p.: n.d.), p. 10.

Nelson, Sven Susag and Nels Renbeck formed the first Board of Directors as President and Manager, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively.

The Old People's Home was founded for the purpose of caring for elderly members of the Church of God, whether Americans or immigrants, who were otherwise without physical and spiritual care. The Basun community felt a very keen obligation to respect and support the aged. Although no stipulations on nationality were made, language was part of the purpose behind the home's establishment. Nels Renbeck made that point clear in a 1907 article explaining the project.

> The goal of the home for old people is, from the first, to care for those who are aged or who lived in places where they do not have good opportunity to hear the Word of God so that they can have it proclaimed in their mother tongue, so their spiritual life can thrive and grow in godly stature. Many have not heard the full gospel.[55]

On the other hand language was apparently no consideration in the matter of staffing the Old People's Home. The English language Gospel Trumpet carried requests as early as 1907 for interested persons to contact the Basun publishing company about the possibility of moving to St. Paul Park to work in the home there.[56]

Guds Menighed did not consider the Old People's Home "some poorhouse where . . . only those who are unable to care for themselves may go."[57] Residents of the home who were healthy and had no desire to "sit still" were given the opportunity to work in the vegetable gardens and fields which were the source of much of the institution's food supply. The home's willingness to provide this opportunity was viewed as a blessing for the aged and a means to care for more persons.[58] Assisting in the gardens and fields was one way "inmates" could support themselves in the home. Those without adequate resources depended upon the contributions of Guds Menighed members "who wish to serve the Lord in this manner."[59]

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[55] Nels Renbeck, "The Home for Old People," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 4.

[56] "Missionary," GT, October 14, 1907, p. 9.

Throughout its years of operation the Old People's Home placed a heavy financial burden on its managing agency, Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. This was true in spite of some large gifts and resourceful construction techniques. Much of the construction labor was donated. A Michigan engineer furnished blueprints and supervised the surveying and site excavation. "A brother from Iowa" built the cellar window frames. A skeleton crew continued publication of the two papers and other literature while all other Basun family members worked on the new building.[60] Other interested persons made substantial cash donations and pledges to underwrite the project cost. An anonymous woman from Chicago donated a matching gift of half the cost of the home, to a maximum of $5,000. "Many hundred dollars" also were promised by members of the Basun community.[61] In mid-August Nelson announced the purchase of a fifty acre plot at a cost of $4,000 on the hills east of the village of St. Paul Park and estimated the total project cost at $10,000. He hoped that small contributions from the paper's faithful subscribers would cover the outstanding indebtedness.[62]

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[57] Renbeck, "Old People," (another reference to the material cited in n. 55); "The Home," (another reference to the material cited in n. 54).

[58] Ibid., "The Home." [59] Ibid.

[60] "From the Office and the Home," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 4.

Financial difficulties continued to plague the home during its years of operation.[63] The original debt was being retired slowly when the building was destroyed by fire in the autumn of 1917. The total value of the institution was then estimated at $35,000 to $40,000, but because the structure was under-insured the corporation sustained a heavy loss.[64] Undaunted by disaster, the directors sold the land on which the institution had been situated and purchased a vacant Methodist college in the village. The Basun community immediately began refurbishing a women's dormitory to make it suitable for occupancy by the elderly and the new facility was occupied in 1918.[65] Guds Menighed's association with the Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest came to an end when the Basun publishing company turned over management of the home to the Gospel Trumpet Company of Anderson, Indiana in 1920.[66] The publication at St. Paul Park of Guds Menighed's message continued for another three years before being transferred to Denmark, but its program of institutional benevolence had concluded.

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[61] "The Home," (another reference to the material cited in n. 54); Thomas Nelson, "The Home for the Aged," DEB, August 15, 1907, p. 6.

[62] Ibid., Nelson.

[63] Each of the following citations refers to a report from St. Paul Park which mentions the continuing problem of the debt on the Old People's Home or the hope that the remaining obligations soon would be met: "Field Reports," GT, August, 1908, p. 13; "Field Reports," GT, May 12, 1910, p. 15; "Field Reports," GT, December 14, 1911, p. 15; "Field News," GT, February 19, 1914, p. 12; "General News Notes," GT, November 25, 1915, p. 12; "Field Reports," GT, October 25, 1916, p. 14; "Field Reports," GT, July 12, 1917, p. 12.

[64] "Field Reports," GT, January 31, 1918, p. 14; "Field Reports," GT, April 4, 1918, p. 13.

The sustained operation of the Old People's Home for more than a decade through trying financial conditions and even following a major disaster indicates the strong sense of commitment the community had toward its benevolent enterprises. Guds Menighed never was numerically large, and yet the group extended its resources beyond all proportion to its size in the construction and operation of its home for the aged. Service to the elderly was a privilege and even duty to be performed by the church even, as events unfolded, through trying times.[67]

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[65] Ibid., "Reports," April 4, 1918.

[66] Warner Press Archives (Gospel Trumpet Company), Board of Directors Minutes. July 20, 1920. "Care for the Aged," Yearbook of the Church of God, (Anderson, IN: Gospel Trumpet Company, 1925), pp. 34-35.

[67] The Church of God Old People's Home of the

The Centrality of Home and Family

Readers and contributors to Den Evangeliske Basun believed that many, if not all, of the injustices of American society were caused by individual corruption. Since "it is in the home that habits are formed, thinking abilities are awakened, and the character is educated for good or evil,"[68] anyone interested in the reform of society would begin by strengthening homelife. Basun writers did not explicitly state that good homes made for a good society, but the home was idealized in a manner which implied the

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Northwest continued to be a financial burden to its new managers. In 1922 the Gospel Trumpet Company directors decided to sell the St. Paul Park institution "for not less than $12,000 cash," but six years passed until a sale was finally completed. Ibid., Warner Press Archives, minutes of meetings under the following dates: June 22, 1922; September 24, 1925; March 23, 1926; and September 12, 1928.

It is very difficult to estimate the wealth of Guds Menighed, either as individuals or collectively. No financial records exist, but none may ever have been kept; other than subscriptions the Basun family relied on the contributions in cash and kind which were donated by the readership and other interested persons. Den Evangeliske Basun unsystematically reported contributions made to its enterprises and often gifts of $50 or even $100 are mentioned, but the identity of the donors is only occasionally disclosed. Because he applied for admission to the Old People's Home, some indication of the net worth of one Basun community figure, the colporteur Olai Christoffersen, is available. In a letter supporting Christoffersen's application O. T. Ring listed the colporteur's assets as follows: a $4,000 note on a farm he had sold on contract, 160 acres of land near Oakdale, North Dakota and a house and lot in St. Paul Park. Christoffersen was 60 years of age when he applied for admission to the Old People's Home in 1920, but he indicated he would be willing to work for a portion of his support; he said he could do farm work and sell books. Archives of the Church of God, Gospel Trumpet Company correspondence file.

[68] "The Christian Home," DEB, July 15, 1906, p. 8.

belief that in an America populated with God-fearing homes at all levels of society social injustice would evaporate.

Home and family life were subjects of great importance to Thomas Nelson. Den Evangeliske Basun carried notice of his having delivered a series of lectures ". . . on homelife with its duties, responsibilities and happiness" March 19-27, 1907. It seems likely that some of the material for these lectures was incorporated into Nelson's large book, Home, Health and Success, published that same year. In his work on the home Nelson expanded the foundation for his opinions from what he employed in his doctrinal works. There is no question but that he considered the home a divinely ordained institution.[69] However, Nelson did not restrict his remarks on the home to a Christian, or even theistic, audience. Operating on the premise that the Bible and nature harmonize, Nelson asserted that natural law demands "the very same thing" of all people, whether or not believers, that the Bible requires of Christians.[70] For Nelson the double ground of his theory of homelife made it and the suggestions he developed from it for a happy home and just society binding on nearly all thinking people.

Setting his principles of homelife on the foundation of biblical command and natural law also effectively opened Nelson's work to comment on a wide variety of topics. Other

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[69] N.n., n.t., DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 4.

[70] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 20.

Basun writers shared his opinion that homes were best which operated by Christian ethics, principally the Golden Rule.[71] But the range of Nelson's comment extended considerably beyond religious terrain to include hygiene, physiology, diet and financial management. His combination of natural law and the Bible, as well as his fundamental belief in the relationship of stable homes and orderly societies, is illustrated in his strong preference that young married couples purchase homes rather than rent:

> Renting and moving from place to place tends to degrade and lower the God-given ambitions in mankind . . . . All young people contemplating marriage and all married people should aim at a home of their own . . . . They should not make it their only interest, but should labor to that end as fast as possible without neglecting present duties.[72]

The cornerstorne of a well-structured home was a stable marriage. Divorce was virtually impossible within the Basun community's conception of marriage and the home. The "original standard of marriage," the union of Adam and Eve in paradise, "excludes every degrading and unnatural standard of men with corrupt minds."[73] According to this standard marriage vows were taken for life. Only the sin of adultery was justification for divorce. On this point Guds Menighed's opinion was unanimous.[74] Even though the Bible permitted divorce by reason of adultery, the group's interpretation of the New Testament ruled out the possibility of remarriage, even for legitimately divorced persons.[75] Therefore, even in the extremely unlikely event of divorce, separated partners were not to re-marry within the lifetimes of their former spouses. The utter inflexibility of the Basun community's belief and practice in this area of family relations left the group with the rather delicate pastoral problem of ministry to people who divorced and re-married prior to casting thier spiritual lot with Guds Menighed.[76] Life-long monogamous union was the ideal form of marriage; indeed, it was the only form:[77]

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[71] Ibid., pp. 54-55 and 69; "A Christian home is not a place where each one seeks his own and will have his own way and will in all things; but a place where the husband seeks to please the wife and the wife the husband, and how the one seeks to outdo the other in consecration and submission. How does it stand in our homes? There is an English saying which says, 'Charity begins at home.'" "The Fruits of the Spirit," DEB, October 1, 1904, p. 2; Mrs. S. O. Susag, "Gentleness," DEB, July 1, 1907, p. 7.

[72] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 539-540.

[73] Ibid., pp. 30-31.

> When God made man. (sic) He knew that it was not good for him to be alone, and therefore he put

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[74] Ibid., p. 33; Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 142-143; "Romans 7 and 8," DEB, September 1, 1904, p. 1.

[75] The community cited the following New Testament passages in support of its prohibition of divorce: Matt. 5:32, 19:4-6, Mk. 10:11-12, Luke 16:18, and I Cor. 7:11-12. Ibid., "Romans."

[76] "Questions," DEB, May 1, 1905, p. 4.

[77] Nelson was particularly concerned about Mormonism on this point: ". . . We wish to warn our readers about Mormonism's apostles, who are sent out over the whole world to join proselytes to their sect. They will say they no longer live in polygamy, but the fact is the law of the United States does not permit such inhuman relations. Mormons still believe this doctrine as much as before, and they will live according to it as much as they have the opportunity." Bibel Emner, pp. 138-139. Mormon

> into his nature that affection which only needed to have the one intended for him and suited for his life partner to appear before him in order to burst into a burning flame . . . .[78]

Within marriage certain definite relationships were thought to exist between husbands and wives. Women were weaker and men stronger, therefore males were to bear the physical burdens of labor in order to provide for their homes. Of course, "this makes it the wife's duty and privilege to lean upon her husband in loving reliance and honor."[79] _Guds Menighed_ had sharp words for women who resented their wifely duties:

> If the wife does her housework grumbling and complaining that she is not a preacher or statesman but must slave for husband and children, instead of doing it with a thankful heart and mind toward God who in his wisdom has made her the 'weaker part,' then no less a thing becomes a question of salvation.[80]

I Peter 3:1 said husbands were heads over their wives. The _Basun_ community read that verse quite literally. Women were to rely upon and serve their husbands in the same manner that Christians depended upon and served God. But the community did provide an exception for the woman whose husband

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missionaries were successful in making numerous converts in the Scandinavian countries, particularly Nelson's native Denmark; see William Mulder, "Mormons from Scandinavia, 1850-1900: A Shepherded Migration," _Pacific Historical Review_, 23 (1954): pp. 227-246.

[78] Nelson, _Home, Health and Success_, pp. 24-25.

[79] "Tolerate Doctrine," (another reference to the material cited in n. 5).

[80] Ibid.

was an unbeliever.[81] Insofar as spiritual matters were concerned women were free of masculine domination. Yet even in this proviso the group's high regard for the male dominated family is evident. Women were advised that their occasional absences from religious services were of no great spiritual consequence when the absentee's goal was the preservation of domestic tranquillity.[82] On no other condition did the Basun advise people to stay home from services.

Thomas Nelson specifically advised each of the sexes concerning their relationship with their partners. Husbands were told their leadership in the family was not instituted for the purpose of male gratification and self-interest. A husband should "nourish and care" for his wife as a "lover that could sacrifice all and give himself up entirely for the good of his wife and home."[83] Nelson gave more advice to women than he did men. Although the weaker sex, women were told they possessed a "God-given influence" over men. Nelson disapproved of "women's rights, falsely so-called" because the women's movement sought the wrong kind of freedom from male domination; "all that is necessary for her is to be respectful, pleasing and loving towards the husband, so that he will be both won and conquered."[84]

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[81] "Questions," DEB, June 1, 1904, pp. 4-5; "Questions," DEB, March 1, 1904, p. 4.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 54-64, *passim*; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 149.

Men were thought to be morally inferior to women in the sense that the latter exerted the greater influence over the home environment. The relationship of wives to husbands was sometimes depicted in terms which suggest that the community regarded women almost as mothers to their husbands, at least in this sense of providing moral leadership for the family. Nelson believed the saying, "I am what my mother has made me," could be applied by many husbands to their wives as well.[85] One might conclude from this that Nelson's ideas on domestic relations were influenced by the late-Victorian attitude which made women models of virtue and defenders of sanctity and modesty while men were permitted a somewhat wider latitude.[86] Nelson would never even have hinted that a sexual double standard existed or was permissible. But certainly he elevated women over men in the matter of moral strength.

Comment on domestic relations was not restricted to masculine and feminine roles. In the pages of Home, Health and Success surprisingly candid advice about sexual matters was also given. Nelson taught his readers that sexual intercourse had been divinely created for two purposes: (1)

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[84] Ibid., Home, Health and Success, pp. 65-70, 308; Bibel Emner, p. 149.

[85] Ibid., Bibel Emner.

[86] Walter Edwards Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 348-353.

procreation, and (2) ". . . for the sake of uniting husband and wife who love each other still closer together while they bestow upon each other the ecstatic pleasures connected with the act of cohabitation rightly, lawfully, and naturally exercised."[87]

Sharply criticized was the opinion of some who suggested that truly sanctified men and women lost their sexual desire.[88] Sexuality was the gift of God and the means by which humans re-enacted the divine creative power, therefore it was affirmed. However, this general acceptance of sexuality, and the recognition that pleasure was one of its purposes, did not prevent Thomas Nelson from suggesting regulations governing the frequency and appropriate times for sexual intercourse.[89]

While pleasure was one of the divinely ordained purposes of human sexuality the Basun community believed that ". . . only the un-natural and wrongly educated . . .

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[87] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 83.

[88] "Such cranks would have us be angels instead of human beings." Ibid., p. 89.

[89] "The rule, then, is: If the husband desires to cohabit with his wife he must find out whether she is willing and agreed; if she does not desire it, he can and must be a man and conquer his desires for the sake of pleasing his wife because he loves her. And if the wife knows the husband's desire and there is no reasonable excuse for not gratifying him--for reason should always be consulted before passion--she should enter into and enjoy it with him . . . . One thing must not be forgotten; namely that it is absolutely necessary for both husband and wife to enjoy the act of cohabitation; otherwise it will work disaster and trouble." Ibid., pp. 87-88.

have not a strong desire and love for offspring."[90] The group firmly opposed abortion and artificial contraception. Marriages without the intention to bear children were described by the paper as "sinful and carnal." Nelson denounced the practice of abortion in his three major books.[91]

Although "mechanical modes of prevention" were "shameful and wrong," family planning was permitted and an acceptable technique for birth control was explained. The threat to a mother's health caused by too frequent conception was adequate justification for couples to employ the rhythm method of birth control.[92] Nelson combined common sense health principles with some of the more bizarre speculations of nineteenth century health practitioners in his prescriptions for the health and safety of mother and fetus. For example, parents were told to avoid conception at those times when the woman was physically unhealthy. But "the mental state for the time being should also be taken into consideration, for it has as much to do with the hereditary influence as does the bodily condition, and probably even more."[93]

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[90] Ibid., p. 94.

[91] Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 147; Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 104-112; Nelson, Veien til Frelse, p. 38; "Questions," DEB, March 1, 1905, pp. 4ff.

[92] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 118-119; Nelson, Bibel Emner, p. 148.

[93] Ibid., pp. 130-131. For much of his "medical"

Guds Menighed expected children to be born into the families of all adults who were not prevented by some medical condition. Much attention was devoted to the care and nurture of children. Couples were told that raising children should be a joyous and pleasurable experience that would almost completely overshadow the sorrows of parenthood. God and nature rewarded parents who reared their offspring according to divine and natural law. "The only reason, then, why children are not a constant source of pleasure to their parents must be because of a lack on the part of the parents either before or after their children were born, or maybe both before and after."[94]

Children were specimens of plastic material completely at the disposal of their parents. Childhood development and its ultimate outcome were the responsibility of mother and father.[95] The "mature mind and good will" of

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knowledge Nelson relied upon the work of Orson Squire Fowler (1809-1887), phrenologist. Fowler's book, Creative and Sexual Science, (Philadelphia and Chicago: The National Publishing Co., 1875), was cited by Nelson in Home, Health and Success. Fowler enjoyed a considerable reputation based on his many large books on a wide variety of subjects. (See Alan Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 6, (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1931), pp. 565-566.) It is impossible to know the path which led Nelson to Fowler. But the former's implicit trust in Fowler's opinions is a fairly good indication of the limitations of Nelson's learning.

[94] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 167.

[95] It is interesting to compare Guds Menighed's ideas on child-rearing with those which Philip Greven ascribes to persons of the "evangelical temperament" in his interesting and provocative book, The Protestant Temperament, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1977). Many family values are similar:

the parent was the final arbiter in the decision which allowed children the freedom to use their "physical and mental faculties." "No parents should ever allow the child to have its own way when contrary to what they understood to be good and wise . . . . The parents are not to be in subjection to the children, but the children are to be subject to the parents . . . . It is for the very best interest of the children, not to govern, but to be governed."[96]

Parents were specifically encouraged to exercise authority over their children. As the child matured parental "government" relaxed, gradually allowing the child more freedom and self-direction. But parents were told to grasp firmly the reigns of authority during the early years of their children's lives.[97] Fathers and mothers who granted their offspring too much freedom too early in life were guilty of raising their children against the will of God.[98] "The first and all-important thing" was "to settle it in

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parental authority, the importance of obedience and regulation in discipline, the emphasis on love and harmony in the home. Greven's study is limited to 17th and 18th century Anglo-American Protestantism. Clearly some of the values of the people who are the subject of his study can be found among non-Anglo-Americans in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A pursuit of the sources of this similarity might reveal common values about home and family life in many ethnic communities and across many generations.

[96] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 170-171.

[97] Ibid.

[98] P. F. Ropp, "Parents' Duties Toward Their Children," DEB, May 1, 1905, pp. 2ff; "Questions," DEB, June 1, 1904, p. 4.

your minds as parents that you are going to govern your child and that it must conform to your will and desires in every respect. Never once let yourself be swayed from this needful and wise resolution."[99]

Once committed to the government of their children, parents were faced with decisions about the enforcement of discipline. Den Evangeliske Basun offered its advice in this area of family life as well. Good parents disciplined their children both by example and through punishment. Nels Renbeck reminded Basun readers that childhood characters were formed in part by their observations of the adults surrounding them. Thus parents could train their boys and girls by setting a good example for them.[100] Before applying the rod of corporal punishment parents ought to appeal to the child's sense of reason "and the love it possesses and owes to its parents."[101] Only when this attempt failed was the rod applied. "Cuffing," "slapping," "ear-pulling," and "spanking" were forbidden, and the size of the instrument of punishment was determined by "the size of the child and by its disposition."[102]

Basun writers understood the sensitivity of many parents toward the use of physical punishment. But the paper was of the opinion that verbal threats without the intention to carry them out was a practice that exposed "one of the weak sides of many parents."[103] Lax discipline was a sin of parenthood to be avoided at all costs. On the other hand, neither were parents to punish in haste or anger. Nels Renbeck offered these words of advice on the proper method of punishing children:

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[99] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 198.

[100] Nels Renbeck, "Childrearing," DEB, February 1, 1907, pp. 6-7.

[101] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 200-204, passim.

[102] Ibid.

> We never ought to chastise our children in anger; it has only harmful consequences. First it is good to speak long with the children and first persuade them of the necessity of being chastised in order to make them after God's pleasure. Pray together with them, and afterwards in the Lord's name give them such chastisement as the Lord may lead us for their best . . .
>
> . . . It is carnal love which loves children so much that we can or will not discipline them . . . . Leave the child alone until it has bowed itself and let it come and ask forgiveness, and then the crying will stop of itself.[104]

Children were not to be provoked by a vengeful father or mother lashing out in anger. Parents who administered a wrathful discipline could expect the transfer of wicked elements into the child's personality.[105]

After example and punishment, parental government could be strengthened through a strict regulation of the child's daily activities. "Regularity and system" were of the greatest importance in human endeavor, therefore they were to be maintained strictly in child-rearing.[106] If children were to grow up to successful and responsible adulthood, regularity had to be inculcated in the first years of life. This regulation of the child's routine could not begin too early; even new-born babies could be placed on a strictly-kept feeding schedule. "Demand feeding" was interpreted as the child's successful imposition of his or her will over the mother's. Only the "firm determination not to give in once started" was necessary, "even if some well-meaning grandmother should say it is cruel."[107] Regular habits were invaluable and parents who truly loved their children would ensure that they were acquired by their sons and daughters.

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[103] Renbeck, "Childrearing," (another reference to the material cited in n. 100).

[104] Ibid.

[105] Nelson, Bibel Emner, pp. 154-155; "On Childrearing," DEB, August 1, 1904, p. 3.

The disciplined and well-regulated child was regarded as a "young disciple,"[108] fertile ground awaiting whatever seed might be sown into it by parental example or instruction. Guds Menighed had polarized its relationship with the world around it; individuals were either of the Body of Christ or of the world, but never both. The application of this element of group identity to childrearing practices was the belief that only two directions existed in which children might grow: ". . . if children are not taught to walk in the correct way of their saintly parents, they will be taught by the world to walk in the wrong way."[109] Religious training in the home was thus crucial.[110] Such training did not pre-empt the need for conversion once children reached the age of accountability, but the Basun community believed religious instruction would "hasten the time when they will turn to God from their hearts and from their free will and desire."[111] To raise children in the "fear and admonition of the Lord" was the highest obligation placed by God upon fathers.[112]

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[106] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, pp. 192-196.

[107] Ibid., p. 186.

[108] Christine Lunde, "Offend Not," DEB, September 15, 1906, p. 4.

Guds Menighed's conception of family life might be described as sharply defining the lines of authority--husband over wife, husband and wife together over children. But the harshness of these lines could be softened by the presence of familial love and consideration for other members of the family unit. As one writer put the matter, "To be an angel without and a devil within the home is not a Christian life."[113] It was reasonable for family members to subordinate their interests and needs to those of sibling or parent, spouse or child; after all, "God hears us in our home, even if our neighbors do not always hear how we speak to our families."[114]

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[109] "Childrearing," (another reference to the material cited in n. 105).

[110] See chapter IV, pp. 207-208.

[111] Nelson, Home, Health and Success, p. 217.

[112] "A Father's Duty," DEB, July 1, 1904, p. 7.

[113] "The Fruits of the Spirit--Meekness," DEB, December 1, 1904, p. 1.

Two words might be employed in a summary evaluation of Guds Menighed's social awareness: simplicity and ambivalence. The community's social ethic was grounded in the gospel and according to Den Evangeliske Basun comprehending the gospel was a simple matter. Learning and talent for exegesis could not substitute for the inspiring presence of the Holy Spirit. "Those who live in highest relation to the Spirit of God best know the Spirit of the Scriptures."[115] Truth possessed a simplicity which made it readily discernible to the spiritually sensitive. Since the ethical injunctions of the New Testament were so easily comprehensible, "common people . . . could receive them, and they took them to themselves and kept them."[116]

The ideal of simplicity governed the Basun community's social application of New Testament ethics. The various social ministries undertaken by the group were not consciously motivated by a social theory or a drive to reconstruct the social order. The Bible, not social theory, was the foundation of true religion and the latter consisted not only of experiential salvation but good works as well.

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[114] Ibid.

[115] Micala Simonsen, n.t., DEB, April 15, 1907, p. 4; "The Word," DEB, September 15, 1906, p. 3.

[116] "Simplicity," DEB, May 1, 1906, p. 1; R. Rothman, "Christ Our Sanctification," DEB, January 15, 1907, p. 1.

The Basun community demonstrates a rigorous consistency in its reading of New Testament teaching as simple commands. Whether in matters of personal or social ethics, the injunctions of the New Testament were to be strictly obeyed. Thus widows received food and shelter, orphans given care and the elderly provided a home out of the same simple reading of the New Testament that prohibited most forms of personal adornment, the use of tobacco or the frequenting of questionable places of entertainment. Perhaps the clearest example of this approach to social ethics is the Basun community's approach to the question of marriage and divorce.

Guds Menighed's social awareness extended beyond the range of common New Testament concerns such as the care of widows and orphans. But the simple application of gospel principles also governed ministries in more sophisticated and contemporary veins. In matters of employer-employee relations the community's overt appeal was always to the Bible rather than economic theory or management practices. Reforms in child labor, the role and status of women and the equitable distribution of wealth were governed by the simple truth of the Gospel. In life's social relationships as well as the personal, "the Christian's ideal is Jesus and his life must be a portrait of Jesus' life. The Son of God has set the example of a holy life and calls us as his followers."[117]

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[117] C. E. Orr, "Holy Associations," DEB, November 15, 1906, p. 1.

To the group itself *Guds Menighed's* social ethic may have been the expression of a simple application of the gospel. But in point of fact that ethic was grounded in authorities, stated or unstated, other than Scripture. This fact leads to the realization of a certain ambivalence in the community's social ethic. The manner in which Thomas Nelson consistently invoked natural law as an authority parallel to the Bible points up the fact that Scripture was not the *Basun* community's only guide to better social relations. Despite a profound mistrust of "the world" some worldly reform goals and instruments were embraced by *Guds Menighed*.

The *Basun* community carried on no lengthy discussions on the merits or shortcomings of the various reform movements of the period 1900-1920. Its attitudes toward such reform programs must be gleaned from the comments that only infrequently appear in its publications. The picture that emerges shows no consistent pattern. *Guds Menighed* opposed in print the efforts in behalf of the women's movement undertaken by the temperance paper, *Reform*. On the other hand, Thomas Nelson clearly sympathized with the progressive senator, Albert Beveridge, in his efforts at the reform of child labor practices. The question of other unstated social and economic attitudes also must be raised. It seems rather evident that Thomas Nelson's basic attitude toward economics and industrial relations was governed by an optimistic *laissez faire* individualism. This opinion never was clearly articulated, but the conclusion of its existence is warranted by his statements on strikes, his endorsement of traditional economic virtues and his rather naive appeal to employers' sense of fairness in setting the wages of their employees. The presence of these extra-biblical authorities, consciously stated or not, complicates an assessment of Guds Menighed's social ethic. They thought they were simply applying the ethical commandments of the Bible. What the group may have failed to realize was that it also mirrored, if only to a small degree, some of the social values of early twentieth century America.

The Basun community was and was not socially isolated. Sociologist Andrew Greeley assists the reconciliation of this apparent contradiction through his concept of the permeable boundaries of ethnic groups.[118] According to Greeley ethnicity is not a means of social withdrawal but a method of incorporation with the rest of society. An ethnic group's boundaries are permeable, i.e. they provide avenues into the society and for the return to the safety of the group. This is so because "ethnic self-definition in the United States is more concerned with defining oneself as part of the American Society and not separate from it."[119] Viewed from this perspective Guds Menighed's social awareness was a permeable boundary of its ethnicity. Beyond the goal of the simple application of New Testament ethics, social concerns afforded the community an opportunity to be involved as Guds Menighed in ministries which were also being conducted by their American neighbors. In the biblical words which they would have employed to express this ambivalent relationship they were "in the world, but not of it."

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[118] Anderew M. Greeley, The American Catholic: A Social Portrait, (New York: Basic Books, Inc./Harper and Row, 1977), p. 21.

[119] Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

The Church of God Reformation Movement came into being in 1880. Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was formally organized in 1907 and disbanded in 1922. During the four decades from 1881-1920 more than 1.7 million Swedes, Norwegians and Danes immigrated to the United States. These immigrants were a major target for the message of Den Evangeliske Basun. Thomas Nelson and the other members of the Basun family were vitally concerned that their fellow immigrants, as well as Scandinavians still in Europe, hear the word of holiness and unity which the publishing company's literature proclaimed.

Frank C. Nelson has studied Norwegian-American attitudes toward assimilation and has discussed four periods in which different attitudes were expressed.[1] The third period, 1900-1920, was one in which the Norwegian-American community placed a renewed emphasis on the need for assimilation. During these two decades Lutheran pastors expressed the opinion that the English language needed to be incorporated into religious services and literature. Johannes B. Wist, editor of Decorah-Posten, advocated the position that Norwegian immigrants should eventually assimilate.[2] It was during this same two decades that Guds Menighed enjoyed its years of spiritual and institutional prosperity. While some Scandinavian immigrants were openly advocating their assimilation into American society, the immigrants of Guds Menighed were constructing an ethnic community. This ethnic identity was not a simple expression of national consciousness. Nationality, especially as expressed through language, combined with religion to form a new identity for the immigrants who joined the Basun community.

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[1] Frank C. Nelson, "Norwegian-American Attitudes Toward Assimilation During Four Periods of Their History in America, 1825-1930," Journal of Ethnic Studies, 9:1, pp. 59-68.

The new ethnic identity taken up by the immigrants of Guds Menighed was the product of a combination of factors: the tendency of the immigrant Americans to think in terms of "Scandinavian-ness" and identify with their fellow Nordic immigrants, an acquired theology of history and an acquired ecclesiology. Ascetic practice and piety served to reinforce group cohesiveness. The fact that the leadership of Guds Menighed acquired intact their theology of history and ecclesiology meant that the group's sense of identity already was well formulated when Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was first organized in 1901. This further meant that the group's sense of identity underwent little development during the two decades of its American career. No need for further development existed: the group possessed the correct interpretation of events, as attested by Scripture and history. The uniformity of the ideas and issues treated in later issues of the paper as compared with early issues impressively supports the conclusion that the group's ethno-religious identity was essentially static for twenty years.

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[2] Ibid.

Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was organized out of a sense of kinship between it and its spiritually destitute Scandinavian brothers and sisters. The phrase "our Scandinavian folk" commonly appears in the Dano-Norwegian and Swedish papers. A bond of nationality and language tied *Guds Menighed* to the people it sought to evanglize. Nationality was a distinguishing mark of the group's new ethnic identity. They did not consider themselves a subsidiary of the Gospel Trumpet Company. Their Old People's Home was primarily an institution for aged Scandinavians. And the retention of the Scandinavian languages was important even to non-Scandinavian Church of God gospel workers. The continuing use of the Dano-Norwegian and Swedish language is one major indicator of a persistent national consciousness among *Guds Menighed*.

A second contributing factor to the formation of *Guds Menighed's* ethno-religious identity was the theology of history it inherited from the English language Church of God movement. The *Basun* community interpreted ~~the~~ apocalyptic literature of the Bible according to church-historical exegesis. Within that hermeneutic they consciously perceived themselves as standing in continuity with the New Testament church. According to this view the apocalyptic literature of the Bible prophesied a latter-day restoration of the New Testament church to succeed a long apostacy. The Church of God movement understood itself as the re-emergent church and Evangeli Basun Publishing Company was the Scandinavian segment within it. Through church-historical exegesis the company and those it influenced read history as the validation of biblical prophecy. Historical events pointed to the re-emergence of the pure New Testament church at the culmination of history. The apocalyptic note of this theology of history lent an urgent tone to the group's sense of identity. This peculiar theology of history decisively shaped *Guds Menighed's* self-perception.

Guds Menighed's ecclesiology represents a third contributor to the group's ethnic identity. Where the majority of church bodies would define the true church according to the four distinguishing marks of unity, sanctity, catholicity and apostolicity, *Guds Menighed* saw three distinguishing characteristics of the true church: the salvation of sinners, the sanctification of believers and the divine healing of the sick. The church was the body of Christ and thus composed of all who had been united with him in faith. This union was understood as achieved through a revivalistic conversion experience. God expected that those who experienced justification would come to a second crisis point in their pilgrimage when they would enjoy the Wesleyan experience of entire sanctification. The true church was comprised of the 'saved and sanctified.' Groups from which either "experiential salvation" or "cleansing from all sin" was absent could not claim to be the true church of God. The third mark of the true church, the divine healing of the sick, was equally important. The gift of healing was among the *charismata* of the New Testament church. *Guds Menighed* was a part of the latter-day restoration of the New Testament church. Therefore *Guds Menighed* was also the recipient of the gift of healing. That assertion was more than an exercise in syllogistic logic. Miraculous healings were expected to occur and their reports frequently appeared in the pages of the community's papers. Without healings doubt arose as to the authenticity of any group's claim to be the true church, either in the whole or in the part. Thus the healings reported in *Den Evangeliske Basun* and *Evangelii Trumpet* served as vital authentications of *Guds Menighed's* claim to be the latter-day restoration of the New Testament church.

In the campmeetings and assembly-meetings of *Guds Menighed* sinners were saved, believers were sanctified and the sick were healed of all manner of infirmities. To the immigrants of *Guds Menighed* these were powerful evidences that indeed they were what they claimed to be--a portion of

God's true church. Since membership in the true church was the only means of securing heaven, the Basun community possessed the powerful weapon of fear in its evangelistic arsenal. Failure to leave denominational Christianity for the true church risked eternal damnation. But the members of the Basun community had not failed to enter the true church, and thus they were joined to a social system that cared for what they judged to be their most important needs. Thus ecclesiology and a theology of history combined with language and national consciousness to form an ethnoreligious identity. This was Guds Menighed's sense of peoplehood.

Guds Menighed's ethnic identity exerted a determinative influence on the beliefs and piety of the individuals associated with it. The group's theology of history demanded a decisive break with past religious tradition and custom. The movement of which Guds Menighed considered itself the Scandinavian element was understood as the culmination of God's historical activity. Individuals were permitted only one decision: the choice whether or not to be identified with this activity. No compromise with the inherited past was allowed. No element of that past was eligible to be carried over into the new thing God was doing among Scandinavians--Guds Menighed. Thus the Lutheran tradition in which the immigrant members of Guds Menighed had been reared simply was not allowed to exercise any influence on the identity, doctrine or piety of the group.

The Basun community's ecclesiology also exercised an exclusivizing influence upon members of Guds Menighed. The group required a radical break with the religious tradition out of which its new members came. All denominations were tainted with the sin of human pride in that they attempted to do what finally was the prerogative of God--organize his church. Not only denominations but also what was termed the "denominational system" were both inherently evil. Because Christians were to shun the very appearance of evil, the demand to "come out of Babylon" was imposed on all aspiring members of Guds Menighed. The attendant come-outism of the Basun community's ecclesiology further isolated the group from past religious traditions, whether ancestral or acquired subsequent to immigration.

Frederick Hale recently has questioned the degree to which Scandinavian immigrants as a class remained loyal to any of the various Scandinavian Lutheran synods of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.[3] He argues that it is erroneous to assume that the vast majority of Nordic immigrants were faithful to the Lutheran church. Certainly the members of Guds Menighed believed that their countrymen were faithful Lutherans and many of the Basun community identified themselves as having been so prior to the decision to enter Guds Menighed. However, a sizeable number of the membership of the Basun community had already embarked on a religious pilgrimage that carried them through several communions before finally reaching Guds Menighed. In other words, for these people any loyalty to Lutheran thought or piety was broken before they entered Guds Menighed. The presence of this element within the Basun community makes difficult a broad generalization about the nature of the passage from Lutheran immigrant to member of Guds Menighed.

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[3] Frederick Hale, "Baptists and the Norwegian-American Immigrant Milieu," Foundations 24 (April-June 1981): 122-136.

The St. Paul Park community sought the separation of its members from the world. But the group's awareness of significant social reform, and its own programs and institutions in behalf of the disadvantaged, reveal the difficulty of hermetically sealing the group from society. Basun community members were discouraged from voting in national elections, but their leaders endorsed progressive legislation of the era. The Bible was regarded as the only necessary ethical code, but Thomas Nelson laid natural law and the phrenology of Orson Squire Fowler alongside it as domestic and medical authorities. Fair labor and wage practices could be supported while simultaneously extolling the virtues of traditional laissez faire capitalism. These dichotomies suggest that Guds Menighed was unsuccessful at sealing itself away from the world. Indeed, where doctrine and piety reinforced the group's ethnicity, social awareness and the various programs founded by the Basun family out of that awareness appear to have advanced the group's assimilation into American society.

Guds Menighed retained a certain measure of control over its social awareness and feelings of responsibility. The warning was clear that the children of God were to be unconformed to the world. But some contact with the world, in the name of Christian charity and brotherly love, also was required of men and women who sought to live according to the New Testament. Such people were not to be of the world, but they were to be in it. So the barrier the community erected between itself and society was not a hermetic seal but a permeable membrane. Passage through this membrane into the world of social reform and back into the safe doctrine and piety of Guds Menighed enabled community members to assimilate gradually into American society.

The peopling of America is a rich and variegated theme in the nation's history. The study of Scandinavian immigrants in the Church of God adds a small but significant strand to the immense tapestry of this story. What has been attempted here is thus popular history. It is not the story of the wealthy or famous, the intellectuals or powerful. The Basun community was composed of ordinary people, immigrants in this case, whose lives were part of the American experience. We are fortunate that they left behind some evidence of the manner in which they pursued the task of making meaning of their lives.

The study of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company and its constituency broadens our knowledge of the immigrant experience by exposing new forces and re-examining old ones which bore upon the processes of ethnic identity formation and assimilation. Certainly the experience of social dislocation through immigration was an important factor in the lives of those who left ancestral homes for America. But Guds Menighed's experience illustrates the powerful influence of religion as a shaper of ethnic identity. The Basun community's sense of peoplehood was formed on the bases of nationality and religion, but the latter was the stronger of the two forces.

Historians have long recognized the importance of religion in immigrant communities. But many of those historians have assumed that immigrant religion meant the inherited tradition of the European or Asian homeland. The career of the Basun publishing company suggests two important modifications of this assumption. (1) Immigrant religious life involved more options than a simple choice between ancestral tradition and membership in an English language denomination. At least one intermediate point existed between these two choices, ethno-religious communities such as Guds Menighed. (2) As a corollary to this first point, the Basun community demonstrates the immigrants' ability to forge new communities, partially out of national factors and partially out of religious; immigrants exercised a selectivity, in other words, toward religion and the role it might play in their establishment of a new sense of peoplehood in America. In the case of Guds Menighed religion assumed a predominant role.

The discoveries which emerge from the study of Evangeli Basun Publishing Company and its constituency expand our knowledge of the American immigrant experience. By examining such groups we are once again reminded, and this seems necessary, that not all newcomers to the United States after 1890 were from southern or eastern Europe. A continuing northern presence existed in the immigrant flood, not to mention Asians and others from the western hemisphere. The American experience of these northern Europeans at the turn of the twentieth century proved something quite different from that of the so-called "new" immigrants. Yet studies often have focussed their attention on southern and eastern Europeans and, since those people tended to settle in large urban colonies on the eastern seaboard, books about them generalize the immigrant experience on the basis of that eastern and urban setting. The immigrant American religious experience has rural and western foci as well. The story of Guds Menighed makes that point abundantly clear.

This study also opens new lines of research in the broader area of early twentieth century American religious history as well as in immigrant history. The Basun community's combination of widely varying attitudes within their social ethic raises the question of what kinds of popular ideas religious communities, immigrant and non-immigrant alike, may uncritically appropriate in the absence of a well-defined thought system. This study also calls for further research in the experience of those immigrants who settled in the Midwest and, especially, the western states. Lastly, the study of Guds Menighed points up the continuing need for analyses of the delicate balance between an immigrant's identity as a member of an ethnic group and his or her assimilation into American society. For many of these people the choice was never simply one or the other, but instead how to balance the two in the effort to understand the new experience of life in America. The life of Scandinavian immigrants in the Church of God demonstrates the contribution religion could make to this process.

In the final analysis, Evangeli Basun Publishing Company fostered an ethnic identity for a small group of immigrants while it simultaneously enabled the assimilation of those immigrants into American society. Thus the route by which Europeans made the passage from immigrant to American must be traced with the recognition that several alternate roads were available. Not all those roads traveled in a straight line. Some combined a variety of features that might hasten or retard assimilation as they were combined with others drawn from widely different sources. One such route was taken by the Scandinavian immigrants of Guds Menighed, who established a sense of peoplehood that was neither Nordic Lutheran nor American holiness movement as the character of their lives changed from immigrant to American.

APPENDIX I

BOOK M OF BONDS
Washington County, Minnesota

No. 41831

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF

"CHURCH OF GOD OLD PEOPLE'S HOME OF THE NORTHWEST"

We, the undersigned, for the purpose of forming a benevolent corporation under and pursuant to Chapter Fifty Eight of Revised Laws 1905 of the State of Minnesota, do hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation.

I.

The name of this Corporation shall be Church of God Old People's Home of the Northwest. The purpose of the Corporation is to provide a home for the aged members of the Church of God, who are otherwise without physical or spiritual care, and after the death of such members to give proper interment to their remains.

The general plan of operation of the Corporation is to gather funds for the work by voluntary contributions, and to place the care and control thereof, and the management of its affairs in the hands of a Board of Directors who are connected with the Church of God, and who will conduct the affairs thereof and carry out its object in accordance with the principles of and in the interest of the Church of God.

The location of this corporation shall be at St. Paul Park, in Washington County, Minnesota.

II.

Any member of the Church of God who contributes to the support and maintenance of the Corporation shall thereupon become a member of this corporation and shall remain a member thereof so long as he remains a member of the Church of God and no longer. No fixed contributions shall thereafter be required of its members, but they shall contribute at such times and in such amounts as they respectively desire.

III.

This corporation shall have no Capital Stock.

IV.

This corporation shall commence as soon as its Articles of Incorporation are properly recorded. The first Board of Directors shall consist of three persons who are to conduct the transactions of the corporation during the first year and until their successors are elected. No person shall be elected a Director of this Corporation who is not a member of the Church of God, and if at any time thereafter he ceases to be a member of the Church of God, he shall thereupon cease to be a Director of this Corporation. The Directors of this corporation shall be elected at the Annual Assembly of the Church of God to be held at said St. Paul Park, and occuring usually in June of each year, and the Directors so elected hold office for one year, and until their successors are elected, but the number of Directors may after the first year, be increased or changed from time to time, provided there shall always be at least three Directors, said change in number to be made by said Annual Assembly. Any vacancy occuring in the Board of Directors may be filled by the remaining members of the Board, the new Directors to hold office until the next annual election thereafter.

The Officers of the Corporation shall be elected by and from the Board of Directors annually and immediately following the election of the Board of Directors as hereinbefore provided, and at the same place where said Board is elected. The Officers shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Manager. They shall hold office for one year and until their successors are elected, and the same person may hold more than one office. Until the annual election in the year 1908, the Board of Directors shall consist of Thomas Nelson residing at said St. Paul Park, Sven O. Susag residing in Kandiyohi County (Paynesville Post Office) Minnesota and Nels Renbeck residing at said St. Paul Park, and until said annual election in 1908, said Thomas Nelson shall be President and manager, said Sven O. Susag shall be Vice President and Treasurer and said Nels Renbeck shall be Secretary.

In case of any vacancy among the officers it may be filled by the Board of Directors at any meeting thereafter held.

In Testimony Whereof We have hereunto set our hands and seals this 28th day of June, 1907.

Executed in presence of) Thomas Nelson (seal)
William Lawrie) Sven O. Susag (seal)
George E. Budd) Nels Renbeck (seal)

State of Minnesota)
)ss.
County of Ramsey)

On this 28th day of June 1907 before me a Notary Public in and for said State personally appeared Thomas Nelson, Sven O. Susag and Nels Renbeck each to me personally known, and known to me to be the persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument and they each acknowledged that they executed the same as their free act and deed.

George E. Budd
(Notarial Seal) Notary Public, Ramsey County.
Minnesota
My Commission expires July 22nd. 1908.

Fild for record this 3rd day of July 1907 @ 2 P.M.

BOOK N OF BONDS
Washington County, Minnesota

No. 42779

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

OF

EVANGELI BASUN PUBLISHING COMPANY

We, the undersigned, for the purpose of forming a religious publishing corporation, under and pursuant of Chapter Fifty eight of Revised Laws 1905, of the State of Minnesota, do hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation.

I.

The name of this corporation shall be Evangeli Basun Publishing Company. The purpose of this corporation is to publish and disseminate religious literature in the Scandinavian language, which is to be supplied free of charge to all who are unable to pay, and to forward the interest of the charitable and mission work carried on by the Church of God, especially in the "Twin Cities" and St. Paul Park, Minnesota.

The general plan of operation of the corporation, is to institute funds to be supplied by voluntary contributions and the sale of literature, and to place the care, and control thereof, and the management of its affairs in the hands of a board of directors who are connected with the Church of God, and who will conduct the affairs thereof and carry out its object in accordance with the principles of and in the interest of the Church of God.

The location of this corporation shall be at St. Paul Park, in Washington County, Minnesota.

II.

Any member of the Church of God who contributes to the support and maintenance of the corporation or subscribes for any of the periodicals published by it, shall thereupon become a member of this corporation, and shall remain a member thereof so long as he remains a member of the Church of God, and no longer.

No fixed contribution shall thereafter be required of its members, but they shall contribute at such times and in such amounts as they respectively desire.

III.

This corporation shall have no capital stock.

IIII.

This corporation shall commence business as soon as its articles of incorporation are properly recorded. The first board of directors shall consist of seven persons who are to conduct the transactions of the corporation during the first year, and until their successors are elected. No person shall be elected a director of this corporation who is not a member of the Church of God, and if at any time thereafter he ceases to be a member of the Church of God, he shall thereupon cease to be a director of this corporation. The directors of this corporation shall be elected at the annual assembly of the Church of God, to be held at St. Paul Park and occurring usually in June of each year, and the directors so elected shall hold office for one year, excepting the officers hereinafter mentioned, which shall hold their office for two years, and until their successors are elected, but provided there shall always be at least three directors. Said change in number to be made by said annual Assembly. Any vacancy occuring in the board of directors may be filled by the remaining members of the board, the new directors to hold office until annual election thereafter.

The officers of the corporation shall be elected by and from the board of directors every two years and immediately following the election of the board of directors hereinbefore provided, and at the same place where said board is elected.

The officers shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Manager, They shall hold office for two years and until their successors are elected, and the same person may hold more than one office. Until the annual election in the year 1908 the board of directors shall consist of Thomas Nelson, residing at St. Paul Park, Otto T. Ring, residing at St. Paul Park, Edwin G. Masters, residing at Minneapolis, Sven O. Susag, residing at Paynesville, Minnesota, Nels Renbeck, residing at St. Paul Park, Emil Kreutz, residing at St. Paul Park, and Lars O. Myhre, residing at Spaulding, Minnesota. And until said annual election in 1908, said Thomas Nelson shall be

President and Manager, said Otto T. Ring shall be Vice President, said Edwin G. Masters shall be Secretary and said Sven O. Susag shall be Treasurer.

In case of any vacancy among the officers, it may be filled by the board of directors at any meeting thereafter held.

In Testimony Whereof, We have hereunto set our hand and seals this 16 day of December, 1907.

Executed in the Presence of	Thomas Nelson	(seal)
E. B. Sperry	Otto T. Ring	(seal)
Olai Christofferson	Edwin G. Masters	(seal)
	Sven O. Susag	(seal)
State of Minnesota,)	Nels Renbeck	(seal)
)	Emil Kreutz	(seal)
County of Washington)	Lars O. Myhre	(seal)

On this 16th day of Dec. 1907 before me a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared Thomas Nelson, Otto T. Ring, Edwin G. Masters, Sven O. Susag, Nels Renbeck, Emil Kreutz and Lars O. Myhre each to me personally known, and known to me to be the persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument, and they each acknowledged that they executed the same as their free act and deed.

E. B. Sperry, Notary Publick
(Notary Seal) Washington County, Minnesota.
My Commission expires May 10, 1912.

Filed for record Dec. 16th 1907 @ 2 P. M.

APPENDIX II

"Vi Hersker med Ham" [We Reign with Him]

All glory to Jesus our Savior,
    Who purchased us with his blood.
And made us kings and priests
    Of the Father who is our God.

He says we are his elect,
    A royal priesthood here,
Re-born, called to holiness,
    We conquer with him, we have love.

We have inherited a kingdom:
    Righteousness, peace and joy.
Let the gate of hell make war;
    Yet our church of God stands fast.

Although many do not see us reign,
    But dream of a thousand years.
So rule we now with our Lord
    In the kindgom which ne'er passes away.

O! Slaves of sinful desires,
    God's kingdom has come down here.
Come in and it will break you.
    Now is the convenient time.

Chorus: We rule with him, God's slain Lamb,
    Who from sin's bondage has freed us,
And makes us kings and priests before God.

--Thomas Nelson
Zions Seiers Sange, No. 83

"Alt paa Alteret" [All on the Altar]

My heart and my all are on the altar now laid;
    I offer it undivided, O God, seal my pact.

My deeds make nothing; it is your work, O God.
    Wholly sacrificed dare I now trust your work and command.

I am casting all on you and believe your word of truth.
    You sanctify me; now your Spirit in me dwells.

I rest in your embrace; perfect is my peace.
    I will praise your name in time and eternity.

Chorus: All on the altar, all on the altar,
I am sanctified by faith and am filled
with the Spirit of God.

--Thomas Nelson
Zions Seiers Sange, No. 60

"Nu er Tiden" [Now is the Time]

Now is the time prophesied
by the prophet in the Old Testament.
The time of the Lord's remnant is expected;
the evening sun shines clear.

Vanishing hours, for each race on earth,
come and go according to God's word.
And to us he says,
"Towards evening it shall be light."

Long ago was a golden time;
it was light when Jesus came.
And his word and church, so gentle,
shined every place they came.

But thereafter came a time of night;
false doctrine hid suddenly
The light of God's word and church.
Clear stars from heaven fell.

Thereupon came a time of night and day.
Dark sects blended with God's cause.
The Lord's flock was spread on the heights,
longing to see better times.

Now is the time, beautiful as morning.
The evening-light drives away every cloud.
Into one flock now are gathered the scattered sheep.
For the Bridegroom the Bride stands ready.

Chorus: Now is the time. Now is the evening time!
Dark clouds hastily melt away.
Now the light shines clearly.
Now is the time, the brief evening-time.

--Thomas Nelson
Zions Seiers Sange, No. 154

"Skatte i Himlen" [Treasure in Heaven]

O gather your treasure in the heavenly land
Where moth and rust can n'er destroy them.

But where they are preserved in the Father's power
And the heart will be drawn where the treasure is laid.

Have you your treasure on earth, my friend?
Your heart will be drawn where your treasure lays.
But it will be ruined by moth and rust;
Soon you will be left without one trust.

But the treasure which is laid up in heaven
Gives strength and points to eternal hope.
And the soul becomes full of God's heavenly peace
And is prepared for heaven's joys.

--Mrs. S. O. Susag
Zions Seiers Sange, No. 86

"*Mit Hjem*" [My Home]

Home, home, you are a star
Here in the world so dark.
In you I would dwell gladly,
As by a brook in the desert.

Home, home, where my mother
Took me in loving embrace,
Taught me, sister and brother
To pray in Jesus' name.

Home, home, where I played,
knew not the sorrows of life.
Although poor and humble
You were my most beautiful castle.

Home, home, you are Eden.
There where loving dwells,
Your happiness and your peace
Shine upon the earth.

Home, home, quiet and sweet,
You walk with us on our way.
If you smile friendly upon us
Then your powers are never blunted.

Chorus: Home, home, my home,
You never leave the mind.
Home, home, O home,
Home of the years of my youth.

--Thomas Nelson
Den Evangeliske Sanger, No. 107

"Har du Hørt det?" [Have You Heard It?]

Have you heard that the Savior has borne
    All our sickness, sin and need?
And that the Father chose Him
    To redeem us by the death of the cross?

Have you heard that when he walked on the earth
    He healed the sick by God's power
And he lifted sorrow from many
    Who through suffering was laid upon him?

Have you heard that to his witnesses,
    When he sent them out in the world,
He gave power to heal the sick,
    And tell all the glad message?

Have you heard that Jesus is the same,
    Today, yes for eternity?
Come to him in faith to receive
    Salvation, healing, strength and peace.

Chorus: Have you heard it? Have you heard it?
        Jesus will heal you here.
    Come in faith. Come in faith.
        He is the great physician.

--Mrs. H. A. Hendricks
Zions Seiers Sange, No. 139

"Jeg Hungrer og Tørster" [I Hunger and Thirst]

I hunger and thirst, O Lord you know;
    I long in heart and mind
To be like you in holiness, to let in your love.
    I know I am yours and my sin is forgiven,
Buried and gone in the earth.
    But I know the root to all the evil in me still dwells.

'Thy will be done.' This has been my prayer
    E'er since my guilt you forgave.
But deep in my heart, in secret and hidden
    Lies something which still opposes.
Though nailed to the cross it still is not dead,
    But struggles for freedom again.
O Lord! I come to you in my need
    To be made holy and clean.

Now will I no longer own the inheritance
    Which was mine in the flesh.
The old must die and be laid in the grave.
    The new must fill me complete.

O cleanse me in the fountain of blood 'til I become
    whiter than snow.
As a vessel is broken, emptied and clean'd, I lay in
    the Master's hand.

Give me a clean heart! Take away sin's root.
    God, your image let me see.
'Crucified with Jesus,' thus says God's word,
    And dead and buried also.
I believe and receive the grace so great--
    The grace in which we stand.
He does what he wills, both before and now,
    He now with his Spirit me fills.

--Thomas Nelson
Zions Seiers Sange, No. 141

APPENDIX III

Contributors to Den Evangeliske Basun and Evangelii Trumpet

Hans Anderson
Anna Christensen
Hans Christenson
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Mrs. Julia Undem
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